

STORIES, GRAVE AND GAY

(FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES)

Edited by

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WITH A FOREWORD

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PREFACE



An attempt has been made in this volume to provide a suitable material for pleasure and instruction to the young schoolboy. It would therefore come as a welcome relief to his worked-up-brain after the drudgery of the Text. To achieve this purpose best, the compiler has aimed at variety and selected widely different stories.

English books for general study tend to be boring if they point in one direction alone. Judicious combination of the moral as well as aesthetic elements makes for appeal in reading.

As a relief to the stories themselves a chapter has been added on "Life in Village and Town" to familiarise the youthful reader with some of the cogent facts to life.

It is hoped that the length of the selections would help to create a taste for sustained description among the readers.

KASHI PRASAD

Due acknowledgement is made for the permission for
inclusion of "Life in Village and Town" by Lady
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RANA PRATAP.

Among the long line of Rajput warriors, few names shine brighter than Rana Pratap's. Desereted by all save his courage he ascended the throne of Mewar with no place in it to call his own. It was one of the ambitions of his life to reclaim Chittor, the capital of his ancestors, from the mighty Moghul Emperor, Akbar. But it was fortunate that his own kinsmen not even excepting his brother, were arrayed against him in the struggle. Marwar, Ambar, Bikaner, Bundi and at the tail of them all Sagarji, who had been nursed along with him in the same houses,—all took part with the Moghul monarch. Treachery stalked everywhere in the land.

But the very vastness of the danger served to infuse fire into the Rajput prince. Alone for a quarter of a century, he withstood the combined efforts of the king and his kinsmen; at one time carrying destruction into the plains, at another, flying from rock to rock, feeding his family with the fruits of his native hills, and rearing his little son Amar amidst savage beasts and scarce less savage men. The mere idea that the son of Bappa Rawal should bow his head to a foreign conqueror was unbearable; and he turned down every suggestion to make his submission to the Moghul or to enter into a marriage alliance with him. The path of honour did not lie that way. He must recover Chittor or die. Few heroes in history have sustained those hardships

which fell to the lot of Rana Pratap. Every valley of Rajputana resounds with the tales of his adventures. It is said that Akbar himself was one of his fervent admirers.

He was nobly supported ; and though wealth and fortune tempted the faith of his helpers, not one was found base enough to desert him. The sons of Jaimal shed their blood in his cause along with the descendants of Patta; the Chandwats, the descendants of Chanda redoubled their devotion to the fallen house; the chief of Dailwara rallied round his banner, as did many others attracted by the very ebb of his fortunes. To keep the memory of Chittor ever-green in his mind Pratap forbade to himself and his followers every article of luxury or pomp, until the honour of his house was vindicated. The gold and silver utensils were laid aside for plates made of leaves, breads were left untouched, and cushions yielded place to straw ; and to mark yet more distinctly their fallen state the military kettle-drums, which always sounded in the van of battle or procession, were commanded to follow in the rear. This last sign of the fall of Mewar survives to this day. This beard of the prince is still untouched by the razor, and though he eats of gold and silver, and sleeps on a bed, he places leaves beneath the one and straw under the other.

With the aid of his chiefs Pratap remodelled his government, adapting it to the need of the times and to his slender resources. New grants were issued with regulations defining the service required. Komulmir, now the seat of his Government, was

strengthened, as well as Gogunda and other mountain fortresses in his possession. Being unable to keep the field in Mewar, he followed the system of his ancestors and commanded his subjects, on pain and death, to retire to the mountains. Many tales are told of the cruelty with which he enforced obedience to his stern policy. Frequently, on a horse, he issued forth to see that his orders were obeyed. The silence of the desert prevailed in the plains. grass grew in place of the waving corn ; public roads were overgrown with the thorny *bahul* ; and beasts of prey made their abode in the homes of his subjects. Once, in the midst of his desolation, a single goat-herd, trusting to escape notice, disobeyed his prince's order, and pastured his flock in the rich meadows of Ontala on the banks of the Banas. After a few questions he was killed.

Akbar took the field against Pratap, establishing his headquarters at Ajmer. Maldeo of Marwar who had so ably opposed Sher Shah, was compelled to follow the example of his brother, prince Bhagwandas of Ambar and to place himself at the footstool of Akbar. After a brave but fruitless resistance, he sent his son, Udai Singh, to pay homage to the king. He was received with distinction at Nagor, and the title of Raja was conferred upon him. Being bulkier than the rest, he was henceforth known as Mota Raja. He was the first of the race to give a daughter in marriage to the Tartar. Four new provinces yielding several crores of annual revenue, were given in exchange for Jod-Bai, the famous princess who became the mother of Shah Jahan and whose magnificent tomb is still to be seen at Sikar.

dra, not far from that in which the remains of Akbar are buried. When a prince in Rajasthan made friendship with the Moghul King by giving a princess in marriage to some one of his relatives the Rana bit his lips in anger. To the honour of Pratap and his issue be it said that, till the very end of Moghul sovereignty they refused marriage alliances not only with the throne, but even with their brother princes of Marwar and Ambar. The autograph letters of the most powerful of the Rajput princes, Bukhet Singh and Jai Singh, bear testimony to the fact that they solicited, to be readmitted to the protection of the Rajput fold—and that this favour was granted only on the strictest conditions.

An anecdote illustrative of the deep repugnance of the Rana family towards admixture of blood may here be related, since the result of this had a material influence on future events. Raja Man, who had succeeded to the throne of Ambar was the most celebrated of his race, and from him may be dated the rise of his country. He was also one of the first chiefs to make a marriage alliance with the Moghuls; and as Humayun married a daughter of Bhagwan Das, he was the brother-in-law of Akbar. His courage and talents well seconded this advantage, and he became the first of the generals of the empire. To him Akbar was indebted for half his triumphs. He was returning from the conquest of Sholapur to Hindustan when he sought an interview with Pratap, then at Komulnir. Pratap advanced to Udaipur to receive him. On the mound which borders this lake, a feast was prepared for the prince

of Ambar. The food was laid, the Raja summoned, and prince Amar appointed to wait upon him; but the Rana himself did not appear and a pretence of severe headache was brought forward to excuse his absence. The chief in a tone at once dignified and respectful replied: "Tell the Rana I can guess the cause of his headache; but the error is grave, and if he refuses to eat with me, who will?" Further pretence was useless. The Rana appeared and expressed his regret; but added: "I cannot eat with a Rajput who has given his daughter to a Turk, and who has probably eaten with him." Raja Man was unwise to have risked this disgrace. He left the feast untouched, save for a few grains of rice, which he offered to Andeva, the god of food, observing as he withdrew, "It was for the preservation of your honour that we sacrificed our own, and gave our sisters and daughters to the Turk; but abide in peril, if such be your resolve for this country shall not hold you" and, mounting his horse, he said, "if I do not humble your pride, my name is not Man," to which Pratap replied that he would always be happy to meet him while someone, in less dignified terms, added that he should not forget to bring his uncle Akbar. The ground was deemed unclean where the feast had been spread: it was broken up and purified with the water of the Ganges, and the chiefs who had witnessed the humiliation of whom they regarded as an apostate, bathed and changed their clothes. Every act was reported to Akbar who was angry at the insult thus offered to himself; and the incident hastened the first of those bloody battles which have immortalised the name of Rana Pratap.

Prince Salim, the eldest of his sons, led the attack guided by the counsels of Raja Man and the distinguished apostate son of Sagarji, Muhabbat Khan. Pratap relied upon the valour of his trustworthy followers to repulse the attack. The mountain range to which he was confined, was the region around the new capital known as Haldighat. It was rocky and barren but very desirable on military grounds. The hills afforded both protection and a base for military operations. Though narrow at places like a street it was dear to the soldier as a paradise. Below, the Rajputs were posted, and on the cliffs and peaks overlooking the field of battle were the faithful Bhils, armed with their natural weapon, the bow and arrow, and with huge stones ready to roll down on the enemy.

Pratap, with the flower of Mewar, defended the head of the pass, and glorious was the struggle for its maintenance. Clan after clan followed one another with desparate courage, emulating the courage of their prince, who led the crimson banner into the hottest part of the field. In vain he strained every nerve to encounter Raja Man: but though denied this privilege, he made a good passage to where Salim commanded. The prince's guard fell before Pratap and, but for the steel-plates which defended his *howdah* the lance of the Rajput would have pierced Salim. His steed, gallant Chetak, nobly seconded his lord and is represented in all

the historical drawings of this battle with one foot raised upon the elephant of the Moghul while his rider has his lance propelled against his foe. The *mahawat*, destitute of the means of defence was slain whereupon the infuriated animal, now without control, dashed away with the rider. At this place the slaughter was immense ; the Moghuls striving to defend Salim, and the heroes of Mewar to protect their prince, who had already received seven wounds. Marked by the royal umbrella, which he would not lay aside and which collected the might of the enemy against him, Pratap was thrice rescued from the clutches of the enemy, and was at length nearly overwhelmed, when Manah, the chief of Jhala gave a signal instance of fidelity, and extricated him with the loss of his own life. Manah seized upon the insignia of Mewar, and, rearing the gold umbrella over his own head, drew after himself the brunt of the battle, while Pratap was carried away from the field. The noble Jhala fell with all his brave vassals ; and in remembrance of the deed, his descendants have, since the day of Haldighat, borne the legal ensigns of Mewar, and enjoyed "the right hand of her princes." But their valour was useless against a force which besides being vastly superior in number, had the advantage of field artillery and a corps. Of Pratap's 22,000 warriors, only 8,000 left the field alive.

Unattended, the Rana fled on the gallant Chetak, who had borne him through thick and thin and who

saved him now by jumping into a mountain stream when closely pursued by two Moghul chiefs. But Chetak, like his master, was wounded. Pratap's pursuers were gaining and were close at his heels, when there fell on his ear, in the broad accents of his native tongue, the salutation "ho! nila ghora ka sawar!" (ho! rider of the blue horse!) and looking back, he beheld but a single horseman—his unnatural brother, now overcome with pity.

Sukta, whose personal enmity to Pratap had made him a traitor of Mewar, beheld from the ranks of Akbar the "blue horse" flying unattended. Resentment was extinguished, and a feeling of affection mingling with sad memories filled his heart. He joined in the pursuit, but only to slay the pursuers, who fell beneath his lance, and now, for the first time in their lives, the two brothers embraced each other in friendship. Here, too, Chetak fell, and as the Rana unbuckled his saddle to place it upon Ankaro, a horse presented to him by his brother, the noble steed expired. An altar was raised in his honour and to this day you can witness the spot where Chetak died; and the entire scene may be seen painted on the walls of half the houses of the capital.

The talk between the princes was necessarily short, but Sukta left his brother with the promise of rejoining him at the first safe opportunity. On

rejoining Salim, the truth of his words was greatly doubted when he related that Pratap had not only slain his pursuers, but Ankaro as well. Salim pledged his word to spare him if he related the truth, and Sukta replied : "The burden of a kingdom is on my brother's shoulders, and I would not witness his danger without defending him." Salim kept his word, but dismissed Sukta from his service. Sukta joined Pratap at Udaipur. On his way thither, he captured Bhainsror. His brother made him a grant of the conquest, and it long remained the chief abode of his descendants.

Of the Rana's kin, 500 were slain in the battle of Haldighat. The ex-prince of Gwalior, his son, and 150 Tuar retainers were among those slain. Since their expulsion by Babar, they had found refuge in Mewar, whose princes strained their resources to keep up the rites of hospitality. Manah lost 150 of his vassals, and every house of Mewar mourned its chief support.

Elate with victory, Salim left the hills. The rainy season had set in, pending operations, and giving to Pratap a few months of repose; but with the spring the foe returned, and he was again defeated. He then took his stand in Komulmir, which was at once besieged by Shabaz Khan. Here he made a gallant and prolonged resistance, and did not retire till insects rendered the water of the

well, their sole resource, impure. This disaster is imputed to the treachery of the Deora Chief of Abu who had gone over to Akbar. Pratap withdrew to Chond, in the heart of the mountain tract on the south-west of Mewar; while the Sonigura chief defended the place to the last. He was slain in the final assault, and by his side fell the chief bard of Mewar, who inspired by his deeds as well as by his songs the spirit of resistance to the Moghul king.

On the fall of Komulmir, the castle of Gogunda was besieged by Raja Man. Muhammad Khan took possession of Udaipur, and Farid Khan approached Chond from the south. Thus beset on every side, dislodged from his most secret retreats, and hunted from glen to glen, there appeared no hope for Pratap. Yet even whilst his pursuers thought him to be lying exhausted in some obscure lurking place, he would, by mountain signals, reassemble his bands and assail them unawares. By a skilful manœuvre, Farid Khan was blocked up in a defile and his force cut off to a man. The Moghuls became weary of combating their ubiquitous enemy; and once more the monsoon swelling the mountain streams, brought a little rest to Pratap.

Years thus passed away, each year decreasing his resources and increasing his misfortunes. His family was the chief cause of his anxiety, he dread-

ed their captivity—a fear often on the point of being realised. On one occasion they were saved by the faithful Bhils, who carried them in wicker baskets and concealed them in the tin mines of Jaora, where they guarded and fed them. Bolts and rings are still preserved in the trees about Jaora and Chond to which baskets the only cradles of the royal children of Mewar, were suspended to preserve them from the tiger and the wolf. Yet amid such crushing evils, the fortitude of Pratap remained unshaken, and a spy sent by Akbar described how he saw the Rajput and his chiefs seated at a scanty meal maintaining all the etiquette observed in prosperity.

But there were times when the wants of his dear children almost drove him to frenzy. His wife was insecure even in the mountain cave, and daily his children wept around him for food. Meals ready prepared had frequently to be abandoned for want of opportunity to eat them. Once his queen and his son's wife had prepared a few cakes from the flour of the meadow grass, of which one was given to each child, and the rest were preserved for the next meal. Pratap lay beside them pondering on his misfortunes, when a piercing cry of his daughter roused him from his reflections. A wild cat had darted on the reserved portion of the food, and the starving child shrieked with despair. Until that moment his fortitude had been unsubdued. He had

moment his fortitude had been unsubdued. He had beheld his sons and his kindred fall around him on the field without emotion—for this the Rajput was born; but the lamentation of his children for food was too much for him to bear. He cursed the name of royalty if it were only to be enjoyed on such severe conditions, and he applied to Akbar to relieve his hardships.

Overjoyed at this offer of submission, Akbar commanded public rejoicings and showed Pratap's letter to Prithvi Raj, a brother of the prince of Bikanir, who had been compelled to owe allegiance to Akbar. The state of Bikanir had recently grown out of the Rathors of Marwar, and being situated on the flats of the desert, had been able to offer but little resistance. Prithvi Raj was one of the bravest warriors of the age, and was at the same time a fine poet and singer,—so much so that in an assembly of the bards of Rajasthan once the palm of merit was unanimously awarded to him. He adored the very name of Pratap, and the information given to him by Akbar that his hero was ready to make his submission, filled him with grief. With all the warmth and frankness of his nature, he told the king that the letter was the forgery of some foe of Pratap. "I know him well", he said; "not for your crown would he submit to your term." He obtained permission to send by his messenger a letter to Pratap, apparently to ascertain the fact of his submission but in reality with a view to prevent-

ing it. The stirring verses which made up the letter were to the following effect. "The hopes of the Hindu rest on the Hindu; yet the Rana forsakes them. But for Pratap, all would be placed on the same level by Akbar; for our chiefs have lost their valour and our females their honour. Akbar is the broker in the market of our race; all has he purchased but the son of Udai; he is beyond his price. Despair has driven many to this market to witness their dishonour from such disgrace. Pratap alone has been preserved. The world asks, where Pratap draws his secret aid from. He has no aid except the soul of manliness and his sword; with them well has he maintained the Kshattriya's pride. This broker in the market of men will one day be got the better of; he cannot live for ever: then will our race come to Pratap for the seed of the Rajput to sow in our desolate fields. To him all look for its preservation, that its purity may again shine forth brightly."

This powerful appeal of Prithvi Raj gave Pratap as much encouragement as reinforcement of 10,000 men. Unable any longer to hold his own in Mewar, he determined to lead his followers to the Indus, plant his banner in the isolated capital of the Sogdi, and leave a desert between himself and his foe. With his family and all that was yet noble in Mewar, he descended the Aravali, and had reached the skirts of the desert when an incident occurred which

caused him to change his plans, and to continue to dwell in Mewar. To Bhama Shah belongs the honour of having saved his country at this crisis. He was the Rana's minister—an office which had long been hereditary in his family; and he now offered to his master the accumulated wealth of himself and his ancestors, which, with other resources, is stated to have been sufficient for the maintenance of 5,000 men for twelve years. This magnificent offering enabled Pratap once more to collect his bands; and while his foes imagined that he was endeavouring to effect a retreat through the desert he fell suddenly on Shabaz in his camp at Dewier and tore his troops to pieces. The fugitives were pursued to Amait, whose garrison suffered the same fate. Before the royal forces could recover from their shock at this astonishing revival of Pratap's strength Komulmir was assaulted and taken: Abdulla and his garrison were put to the sword, and thirty-two other fortified posts were carried by surprise, the troops being put to death without mercy. In one short campaign, Pratap recovered the whole of Mewar, except Chittor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh; and as some slight retaliation on Raja Man, who had fulfilled to the letter his threat that Pratap should "live in peril", he invaded Ambar, and sacked its chief mart of commerce, Malpura.

Udaipur was also regained, though this acquisition was so unimportant as scarcely to deserve mention. In all likelihood it was abandoned by Akbar

owing to the difficulty of defending it when all around had submitted to Pratap. The repose which Pratap enjoyed during the latter years of his life was mainly due to the fact that Akbar had found new fields for his ambition in the south though partly it must also be due to the influence which the conduct of the Hindu prince had exerted, not only upon Akbar but upon the many Rajput princes who swelled his train, and whose inclinations it would have been dangerous to that with indifference.

Repose, was, however, disadvantageous to Pratap. A mind such as his could enjoy no peace as long as, from the head of the pass which guarded Udaipur, his eye could catch sight of the towers of Chittor, which he knew must never more be his. Eager to redeem the glory of his race, this distant view of Chittor gave him more pain than joy. This mental anguish preyed on his exhausted body and hastened his death while he was still in the prime of life.

The picture which is drawn of the last scene of his life is a most pathetic one. The dying hero is lying in a lowly dwelling; his chiefs—the faithful companions of many a glorious day—wait round his bed. A groan of mental anguish makes one of the chiefs named Salumbea enquire what afflicts his soul that it cannot depart in peace. "It lingers," is the reply, "for some consolatory pledge that my country shall not be abandoned to the Turk;" and with the death pangs on him, he tells a story from which he

had concluded that his son's ease-loving disposition would make him forget his own and his country's wrongs. On the banks of the Peshoda, he tells them, he and his men had constructed a few huts to protect them from the rains in the days of their distress. Prince Amar forgot the lowness of the dwelling, and a projecting bamboo of the roof caught the folds of his turban and dragged it off as he entered. A cry of impatience showed that the prince was annoyed, and Pratap, observing it, formed the opinion that his son would never withstand the hardship inevitable in a cause like theirs. "These huts," said the dying prince "will give way to luxurious dwellings thus producing the love of ease; and the independence of Mewar, which we have shed our blood to maintain, will be sacrificed to luxury. And you, my chiefs," he added, "will follow the evil example." They pledged their honour and became sureties for the prince, that they would not permit mansions to be raised till Mewar had recovered her independence; and then the soul of Pratap was satisfied, and he expired in peace. A rare personality to exhort and to expire!

FATHERS AND SONS

One of the noblest characters in old Roman history is the first Scipio Africanus, and his first appearance is in a most pleasing light, at the battle of the River Ticinus, B. C. 218, when the Carthaginians, under Hannibal, had just completed their wonderful march across the Alps, and surprised the Romans in Italy itself.

Young Scipio was then only seventeen years of age, and had gone to his first battle under the eagles of his father, the Consul, Publius Cornelius Scipio. It was an unfortunate battle; the Romans, when exhausted by long resistance to the Spanish horse in Hannibal's army were taken in flank by the Numidian cavalry, and entirely broken. The Consul rode in front of the few equities he could keep together, striving by voice and example to rally his forces, until he was pierced by one of the long Numidian javelins, and fell senseless from his horse. The Romans thinking him dead, entirely gave way; but his young son would not leave him, and, lifting him on his horse, succeeded in bringing him safe into the camp, where he recovered, and his after days retrieved the honour of the Roman army.

The story of a brave and devoted son comes to

us to light up the sadness of civil wars between Cavaliers and Roundheads in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was soon after King Charles had raised his standard at Nottingham, and set forth on his march for London, that it became evident that the Parliamentary army, under the Earl of Essex, intended to intercept his march. The King himself was with the army with his two boys, Charles and James; but the General-in-chief was Robert Bertie, Earl of Lindsay, a brave and experienced old soldier, sixty years of age, godson to Queen Elizabeth, and to her two favourite Earls whose Christian names he bore. He had been in Essex's expedition to Cadiz, and had afterwards served in the Low Countries, under Prince Maurice of Nassau; for the long Continental wars had throughout King James's peaceful reign been treated by the English nobility as schools of arms, and a few campaigns were considered as a graceful finish to a gentleman's education. As soon as Lord Lindsay had begun to fear that the disputes between the King and Parliament must end in war, he had begun to exercise and train his tenantry in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, of whom he had formed a regiment of infantry. With him was his son Montagu Bertie, Lord Willoughby, a noble-looking man of thirty-two, of whom it was said, that he was "as excellent in reality as others in pretence," and that, thinking "that the cross was an ornament to the crown, and much more to the coronet, he satisfied not himself with the mere

exercise of virtue, but sublimated it, and made it grace." He had likewise seen some service against the Spaniards in the Netherlands; and after his return had been made a captain in the Life-guards, and a Gentleman of the Bedchamber Vandyke has left portraits of the father and the son; the one a baldheaded, alert, precise-looking old warrior, with the cuirass and gauntlets of elder warfare; the other, the very model of a cavalier, tall, easy, and graceful, with a gentle reflecting face, and wearing the long lovelocks and deep point lace collar and cuffs characteristic of Queen Henrietta's Court. Lindsay was called General-in-chief, but the King had imprudently exempted the cavalry from his command, its general, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, taking orders only from himself. Rupert was only three-and-twenty, and his education in the wild school of the 'Thirty Years' War had not taught him to lay aside his arrogance and opinionativeness; indeed, he had shown great petulance at receiving orders from the King through Lord Falkland.

At eight o'clock, on the morning of the 23rd October King Charles was riding along the ridge of Edgehill, and looking down into the Vale of Red Horse, a fair meadow land, here and there broken by hedges and copses. His troops were mustering around him, and in the valley he could see with his telescope the various Parliamentary regiments as

they puréed out of the town of Keinton, and took up their position in three lines. "I never saw the rebels in a body before," he said, as he gazed sadly at the subjects arrayed against him. "I shall give them battle. God, and the prayers of good men to Him, assist the justice of my cause." The whole of his forces, about 11,000 in number, were not assembled till two o'clock in the after-noon, for the gentlemen who had become officers found it no easy matter to call their farmers and retainers together, and marshall them into any sort of order. But while one troop after another came trampling, clanking, and shouting in, trying to find and take their proper place, there were hot words round the Royal Standard.

Lord Lindsay, who was an old comrade of the Earl of Essex, the commander of the rebel forces: knew that he would follow the tactics they had both together studied in Holland, little thinking that one day they should be arrayed one against the other in their own native England. He had a high opinion of Essex's generalship, and insisted that the situation of the Royal army required the utmost caution. Rupert, on the other hand, had seen the swift fiery charges of the fierce troopers of the Thirty Years' War, and was backed up by Patrick, Lord Ruthven, one of the many Scots who had won honour under the great Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus. A sudden charge of the Round-horse would, Rupert argued, sweep the Roundheads from the field, and the foot would have nothing to do but to follow up the victory. The great

portrait at Windsor shows us exactly how the King must have stood, with his charger by his side, and his grave, melancholy face, sad enough at having to fight at all with his subjects, and never having seen a battle, entirely bewildered between the ardent words of his spirited nephew and the grave replies of the well-seasoned old Earl. At last, as time went on; and some decision was necessary, the perplexed King, willing at least not to irritate Rupert, desired that Ruthven should array the troops in the Swedish fashion.

It was a greater affront to the General-in-chief that the King was likely to understand, but it could not shake the old soldier's loyalty. He gravely resigned the empty title of General, which only made confusion worse confounded, and rode away to act as colonel of his own Lincoln regiment, pitying his master's perplexity, and resolved that no private pique should hinder him from doing his duty. His regiment was of foot soldiers, and was just opposite to the standard of the Earl of Essex.

The church bell was ringing for afternoon service when the Royal force marched down the hill. The last hurried prayer before the charge was stout old Sir Jacob Astley's "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me," then, rising, he said, "March on, boys." And, amid prayer and exhortation, the other side awaited the shock, as men whom a strong and deeply embittered sense of wrong had roused to take up arms. Prince Rupert's charge was, how-

ever, fully successful. No one even waited to cross swords with his troopers, but all the Round-head horses galloped head-long off the field, hotly pursued by the Royalists. But the main body of the army stood firm, and for some time the battle was nearly equal, until a large troop of the enemy's cavalry who had been kept in reserve, wheeled round and fell upon the Royal forces just when their scanty supply of ammunition was exhausted.

Step by step however, they retreated bravely, and Rupert, who had returned from his charge, sought in vain to collect his scattered troopers so as to fall again on the rebels; but some were plundering, some chasing the enemy, and none could be got together. Lord Lindsay was shot through the thigh bone, and fell. He was instantly surrounded by the rebels on horseback; but his son, Lord Willoughby, seeing his danger, flung himself alone among the enemy, and forcing his way forward, raised his father in his arms, thinking of nothing else, and unheeding his own peril. The throng of enemy around called to him to surrender, and, hastily giving up his sword, he carried the Earl into the nearest shed, and laid him on a heap of straw vainly striving to staunch the blood. It was a bitterly cold night, and the frosty wind came howling through the darkness. Far above, on the ridge of the hill, the fires of the King's army shone with red light, and some way off on the other side twinkled those of the Parliamentary forces. Glimmering lanterns or torches moved about the battle

field, those of the savage plunderers who crept about to despoil the dead. Whether the battle were won or lost, the father and son knew not and the guard who watched them knew as little. Lord Lindsay himself murmured, "If it please God I should survive, I never will fight in the same field with boys again!" no doubt deeming that young Rupert had wrought all the mischief His thoughts were all on the cause, his son's all on him; and piteous was that night, as the blood continued to flow, and nothing availed to check it nor was any aid near to restore the old man's ebbing strength.

Towards midnight the Earl's old comrade Essex had time to understand his condition, and sent some officers to enquire for him, and promise speedy surgical attendance. Lindsay was still full of spirits, and spoke to them so strongly of their broken faith, and of the sin of disloyalty and rebellion, that they slunk away one by one out of the hut, and dissuaded Essex from coming himself to see his old friend, as he had intended. The surgeon, however, arrived, but too late, Lindsay was already so much exhausted by cold and loss of blood, that he died early in the morning of the 24th; all his son's gallant devotion having failed to save him.

The sorrowing son received an affectionate note the next day from the King, full of regret for his father and esteem for himself. Charles made every effort to obtain his exchange, but could not succeed

for a whole year. He was afterwards one of the four noblemen who, seven years later, followed the King's white silent, snowy funeral in the dismantled St George's Chapel ; and from first to last he was one of the bravest, purest and most devoted of those who did honour to the Cavalier cause.

We have still another brave son to describe, and for him we must turn away from these sad pages of our history, when we were a house divided against itself, to one of the hours of our brightest glory, when the cause we fought in was the cause of all the oppressed, and nearly alone we upheld the rights of oppressed countries against the invader. And thus it is that the battle of the Nile is one of the exploits to which we look back with the greatest exultation, when we think of the triumph of the British flag.

Let us think of all that was at stake. Napoleon Bonaparte was climbing to power in France, by directing her successful arms against the world. He had beaten Germany and conquered Italy; he had threatened England, and his dream was of the conquest of the East. Like another Alexander, he hoped to subdue Asia, and overthrow the hated British power by depriving it of India. Hitherto, his dreams had become earnest by the force of his marvellous genius, and by the ardour which he breathed into the whole French nation; and when he set sail from Toulon, with 40,000 tried and victorious soldiers and a magnificent fleet, all were filled with vague and unbounded expectations of

almost fabulous glories. He swept away as it were the degenerate Knights of St. John from their rock of Malta, and sailed for Alexandria in Egypt, in the latter end of June, 1798.

His intentions had not become known, and the English Mediterranean fleet was watching the course of his great armament. Sir Horatio Nelson was in pursuit, with the English vessels, and wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty: "Be they bound to the Antipodes, your lordship may rely that I will not lose a moment in bringing them to action."

Nelson had, however, not ships enough to be detached to reconnoitre, and he actually overpassed the French, whom he guessed to be on the way to Egypt; he arrived at the port of Alexandria on the 28th June, and saw its blue waters and flat coast lying still in their sunny torpor, as if no enemy were on the seas. Back he went to Syracuse, but could learn no more there; he obtained provisions with some difficulty, and then, in great anxiety, sailed for Greece; where at last on the 28th July, he learnt that the French fleet had been seen from Canada, steering to the south-east, about four weeks since. In fact, it had actually passed by him in a thick haze, which concealed each fleet from the other, and had arrived at Alexandria on the 1st July, three days after he had left it!

Every sail was set for the south, and at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st August a very

different sight was seen in Aboukir Bay, so solitary a month ago. It was crowded with shipping. Great castle-like men-of-war rose with all their proud calm dignity out of the water, their dark portholes opening in the white bands on their sides, and the tri-coloured flag floating as their ensign. There were thirteen ships of the line and four frigates and, of these, three were 80-gun ships, and one towering high above the rest, with her three decks, was *L' Orient*, of 120-guns. Look well at her, for there stands the hero for whose sake we have chosen this and no other of Nelson's glorious fights to place among the setting of our Golden Deeds. There he is, a little *cadet de vaisseau*; as the French call a midshipman, only ten years old, with a heart swelling between awe and exultation at the prospects of his first battle; but, fearless and glad, for is he not the son of the brave Casabianca, the flag-captain? And is not this Admiral Brueys' own ship, looking down in scorn on the fourteen little English ships, not one carrying more than 74 guns, and one only 50?

Why Napoleon had kept the fleet there was never known. In his usual mean way of disavowing whatever turned out ill, he laid the blame upon Admiral Brueys; but, though dead men could not tell tales his papers made it plain that the ships had remained in obedience to commands though they had not been able to enter the harbour of Alexandria. Large rewards had been offered to

any pilot who would take them in, but none could be found who would venture to steer into that port a vessel drawing more than twenty feet of water. They had, therefore, remained at anchor outside, in Aboukir Bay, drawn up in a curve along the deepest of the water, with no room to pass them at either end, so that the commissary of the fleet reported that they could bid defiance to a force more than double their number. The admiral believed that Nelson had not ventured to attack him when they had passed by one another a month before, and when the English fleet was signalled, he still supposed that it was too late in the day for an attack to be made.

Nelson had, however, no sooner learnt that the French were in sight than he signalled from his ship, the *Vanguard* that preparations for battle should be made, and in the meantime summoned up his captains to receive his orders during a hurried meal. He explained that, where there was room for a large French ship to swing, there was room for a small English one to anchor, and, therefore, he designed to bring his ships up to the outer part of the French line and station them close below their adversaries; a plan that he said Lord Hood had once designed, though he had not carried it out.

Captain Berry was delighted, and exclaimed, "if we succeed, what will the world say?"

"There is no *if* in the case," returned Nelson, "that we shall succeed is certain. Who may live to tell the tale is a very different question."

And when they rose and parted, he said, "Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey."

In the fleet went, through a fierce storm of shot and shell from a French battery in an island in advance. Nelson's own ship, the *Vanguard*, was the first to anchor within half-pistol-shot of the third French ship, the *Spartiate*. The *Vanguard* had six colours flying, in case any should be shot away and such was the fire that was directed on her, that in a few minutes every man at the six guns in her forepart was killed or wounded, and this happened three times. Nelson himself received a wound in the head, which was thought at first to be mortal, but which proved but slight. He would not allow the surgeon to leave the sailors to attend to him till it came to his turn.

Meantime his ships were doing their work gloriously. The *Bellerophon* was, indeed over-powered by *L'Orient*, 200 of her crew killed, and all her masts and cables shot away, so that she drifted away as night came on; but the *Swiftsure* came up in her place, and the *Alerander* and *Leander* both poured in their shot. Admiral Brueys received three wounds, but would not quit his post, and at length a fourth shot almost cut him in two. He desired not to be carried below, but that he might die on deck.:

About nine o'clock the ship took fire, and blazed up with fearful brightness, lighting up the whole bay, and showing five French ships with their colours hauled down; the others still fighting on. Nelson himself rose and came on deck when this fearful glow came shining from sea and sky into his cabin; and gave orders that the English boats should immediately be put off for *L'Orient*, to save as many lives as possible.

The English sailors rowed up to the burning ship which they had lately been attacking. The French officers listened to the offer of safety, and called to the little favourite of the ship, the captain's son, to come with them. "No," said the boy, "he was where his father has stationed him, and bidden him not to move save at his call." They told him his father's voice would never call him again, for he lay senseless and mortally wounded on the deck, and that the ship must presently blow up. "No," said the brave child, "he must obey his father." The moment allowed no delay—the boat put off. The flames showed all that passed in a quivering glare more intense than daylight, and the little fellow was then seen on the deck, leaning over the prostrate figure, and presently tying it to one of the spars of the shivered masts.

Just then a thundering explosion shook down to the very hold every ship in the harbour, and burning fragments of *L'Orient* came falling far and wide, splashing heavily into the water, in the dead, awful stillness that followed the fearful sound.

English boats were plying busily about, picking up those who had leapt overboard in time. Some were dragged in through the lower portholes of the English ships, and about seventy were saved altogether. For one moment a boat's crew had a sight of a helpless figure bound to a spar, and guided by a little childish swimmer, who must have gone overboard with his precious freight just before the explosion. They rowed after the brave little fellow, earnestly desiring to save him; but in darkness, in smoke, in lurid uncertain light, amid hosts of drowning wretches, they lost sight of him again.

The boy, oh where was he!
 Ask of the winds that far around
 With fragments strewed the sea;
 With mast and helm, and pennant fair,
 That well had borne their part;
 But the noblest thing that perished there
 Was that young faithful heart!

By sunrise the victory was complete. Nay, as Nelson said, "It was not a victory, but a conquest." Only four French ships escaped and Napoleon and his army were cut off from home. These are the glories of our navy, gained by men with hearts as true and obedient as that of the brave child they had tried in vain to save. Yet still, while giving the full meed of thankful, sympathetic honour to our noble sailors, we cannot but feel that the Golden Deed of Aboukir Bay fell to—

"That young faithful heart."

LIFE IN VILLAGE AND TOWN

There are over 750,000 villages and nearly ninety per cent. of all the millions of India are village folk living in rural areas. One hears so much of the doings of townspeople that it is easy to forget this. According to the 1931 Census only eleven per cent of the population was reckoned as urban, and in the whole of the great country of India there were only thirty-seven towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants, while the small United Kingdom has fifty-six. The two largest cities of India are Calcutta and Bombay, both great centres of shipping, of commerce and of industry, with a population of more than a million each. Madras, the third city, is less than half the size of Calcutta. Hyderabad (Deccan), the largest town of the Indian States, comes fourth on the list.

It is not generally realized that Calcutta is the biggest city in the British Empire after London. It was founded by the East India Company and has been built up largely by the energy and enterprise of British traders, an achievement of which they may well feel proud. Its main streets and shops, its parks, its monuments and public buildings bear comparison with those of any modern capital. To these the poorer Indian quarters of the town,

with their narrow, untidy lanes, form a sharp contrast, though much has been done to improve them in recent years. The great Calcutta market, known as the 'new market' quite close to the big European shops, is a source of unfailing interest to the visitor. Here may be bought not only all sorts of eatables, but all kinds of wares both from the East and from the West. Calcutta has its museums, its colleges, its hospitals and institutes, its picture theatres, its race-course, its Zoo, even its Botanical Gardens, where may still be seen the famous Banyan tree with its countless trunks, covering ground 1,000 feet in circumference.

In contrast to Calcutta, the city of Bombay is the chief centre of Indian commercial enterprise, and especially of the cotton trade. It has a much finer situation than Calcutta, and its harbour is one of the most beautiful in the world. But it is built on an island, and overcrowding, especially in the quarters where the mill-hands live, is nothing less than appalling, though Bombay too has many wide roads and houses.

All over India in the towns, although houses of more than two storeys are the exception, and the better ones are built with verandahs and courtyards, the poor live crowded up in dark and ill-ventilated rooms, often without windows. If a stranger appears in the by-ways, he will be amazed at the number of curious, bright-eyed children, some with closely-shaven heads, who collect on the spot in a moment. Yet in spite of the overcrowding, town dwellers have certain advantages over

the peasants in the villages. They have at least a clean water supply and sanitation provided by the municipality. They are in easy reach of hospitals, and of good schools for the children. They have far greater opportunities for amusement and for acquiring knowledge and experience of many kinds than village folk.

Many are engaged in industry and handicrafts, others as small traders, some in the big business firms as owners or clerks. Those of a certain trade or calling often live together so that we may find a street of tailors, of embroiderers, of carpenters, of cloth-sellers, of brass-workers, each set belonging, if they are Hindus, to one group. They generally ply their craft sitting on the ground in the characteristic Indian manner. Even in many middle-class homes there is little in the way of furniture. The typical Indian shop has no shop-front, but is open on the street, with the floor generally raised a little above the road level. The shopping quarter or *bazar* as it is invariably called in India, is always a lively scene. There is generally a separate grain market, vegetable market, market for piece-goods, and so on. The meat-sellers are mainly Muhammadans. Bread is only eaten by Europeans and the very few who live in Western fashion. Many of both buyers and sellers carry goods in baskets on the head, and heated are the disputes in the bazar as to value in terms of rupees, annas and pies. The rupee is a silver coin worth 1s. 6d.; sixteen annas make a rupee, and twelve pies go to an anna. Even a pice (three pies)

is not small to be despised by the many beggars who appeal to the passer-by.

It is a common thing in an Indian town, and even in a city like Calcutta, to see a large white sacred bull wandering among the people and helping himself at will to grain from the shops. No one drives him off or is disturbed by him. In some places like Jaipur, peacocks and monkeys, as well as cows, are regarded as sacred.

Town life begins with the dawn before the heat of the day, but when the sun is at his fiercest there is a lull, and for one or two hours a hush falls over the greater part of the city. It is not at all uncommon to see men, stretched at full length, asleep by the side of the road. India has not yet been caught in the ceaseless rush of the West.

In the north, the stranger notices at once how few women are to be seen among the crowds in the streets or in the shops; there are far more as one travels south. The Indian towns-woman of the middle classes does not as a rule mix freely with men; she spends a great part of her life indoors engaged in the duties of the home. Even among the comparatively wealthy she probably prepares many of the dishes herself or directs their preparation. It is not beneath the dignity of any Indian woman to cook.

Domestic service is regarded as a very important occupation, and employs nearly two million male workers besides large numbers of women. The servants employed by Europeans; other than ladies'

and children's ayahs, are almost exclusively men, who go about the house noiselessly on their bare feet and are devoted and efficient in their work. All sewing is done by men tailors or *darzis*, and the sewing-machine, like the bicycle, has its way into the hearts of the people in every town and many a village. Almost all washing is done by *dhobis*, as they are called (men and women). They form a caste of their own, one of those which come into the category of the Depressed Classes, and they may often be seen carrying on their work according to their own time-honoured method of beating the garments on a stone. Barbers form an important caste; they go round to their clients, and are to be seen shaving them in the morning by the roadside, where the light is certainly much better than in most small houses.

The *bhishtis*, or water-carriers, are mainly Muhammadans who carry the water in goat-skins, but their work is getting diminished year by year in the towns by the installation of the tap-system. Hindu water-carriers use tin or brass vessels. The ugly modern kerosene tin is put to this and to a host of other uses. Among the Hindus there is a great demand for Brahman cooks, since they alone may cook for all castes. Muhammadans and Europeans generally employ Muhammadans both as cooks and table servants. Indians usually take their meals only twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. Orthodox Hindus of all social classes wash completely before eating, generally pouring water over

the head. Meals are taken sitting on the floor, and the food is served in earthenware and brass vessels or on fresh banana leaves, and eaten with the fingers. It is customary for the women to look after the men, and only to eat after the men have finished.

The average dietary of the poorer classes varies in different provinces sometimes consisting almost entirely of rice, as in Bengal and Madras, sometimes chiefly of *Chapatis*, which are rather like tough pan-cakes, made of coarse flour and water. Salt and red pepper (chillies) are used by the poorest to make the rice, millet, or other grain palatable, and elaborate curries of various condiments and spices such as turmeric, ginger, pepper and cardamom, by those who can afford them; the cooking is often done with *ghi*, clarified butter made from buffalo's milk, or with some vegetable oil. Milk curds are a favourite dish and there are many varieties of Indian sweets. Some castes of Hindus eat meat, other than beef. The best-fed province is said to be the Punjab, where two-thirds of the people are Sikhs or Muhammadans, and the diet of all classes is more varied than elsewhere, including wheat, milk, and vegetables. Bananas (often called plantains), mangoes, oranges and coconuts are the most typical fruits of India. Cooking is done on the most simple form of stove, and even elaborate Western dinners of many courses are frequently cooked, and very well cooked too, two or three holes filled with charcoal.

Finely chopped betel-nut mixed with lime and wrapped in a leaf of pepper-vine called *pan*, is chewed by all and sundry between meals, and produces the bright-red colour so often noticeable on lips and tongue. Among the better classes the offering of *pan* and spices is part of the ceremony of hospitality, and many beautiful dishes and boxes are designed for this purpose.

For town and village alike, for Hindu and for Muslim, weddings are the great events in Indian family life. They are celebrated with processions, with feasting and with music often continued right through the night; and an amount of money will be spent on them, especially among the poorer and middle classes, which is frequently out of all proportion to the income of the head of the family, and casts him for years into the clutches of the money-lender. As the dowry system is still in vogue in the greater part of India, one can understand why parents pray for the birth of many sons rather than of many daughters. Wedding celebrations vary of course very greatly according to the position of the family, but even among people of modest means there is generally an elaborate procession from the bridegroom's house with music, banners, and often wedding presents, and with the bridegroom gorgeously attired and seated in a triumphal car as the central figure. India is noted for her lavish hospitality, and at weddings among all classes, guests are entertained on a more than generous scale. The

actual wedding takes place in the house of the young bride, who is beautifully dressed, and if the family is wealthy, she is literally loaded with jewels. Among the Hindus the bride usually wears red and the ceremonies are conducted by the family priest, and include the recital of religious verses or *mantras* and walking seven times round the sacred fire.

The most auspicious seasons for Hindu weddings correspond roundly to February, April and August, and at these times every evening may be heard the drums, songs and fireworks of some marriage celebration. So profound is the belief in horoscopes that much care is taken in selecting not only an auspicious day but an auspicious hour for a wedding, which be late in the night. In India astrologers are everywhere held in great respect; horoscopes are often accepted in lieu of birth certificates, and many people will not undertake any step of importance without consulting an astrologer to ascertain if the stars are adverse.

Just as weddings are the chief celebrations in family life, religious festivals are the chief celebrations in the life of the community as a whole. There are a great number of Hindu festivals, though many are in connection with local deities, and only observed locally.

The chief holiday of the year in a great part of India is the Durga Puja of Dasara (Puja means worship) in the autumn, culminating in the Dasara

festival on the tenth day. It is held in honour of Durga or Kali, the wife of Shiva. Crowds pass through the temples and make offerings. All ten days are kept as holidays in Bengal and Mysore, and the tenth day is an official holiday throughout India.

Another widely celebrated festival is Diwali, the Feast of lamps, when the cities are ablaze with thousands of little lights in honour of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity. The art of illumination, both on land and water, is very old in India, and the effect of myriads of oil lights (*chirags*) in little mud saucers fixed to bamboo poles is far softer and more beautiful than that of the electric lights which are so fast replacing them. India is also the home of fireworks, which give delight to young and old on all festive occasions. To the young people, dressed in their best, these festivals are great days, even if their original significance has been over-shadowed by their traditional celebration. At the Holi celebration in the spring, red powder continues to be sprinkled on all and sundry; at the Saraswati Puja in Bengal, the festival of the goddess of learning, students build elaborate shrines representing natural scenery for the image of the goddess, and finally carry her in procession to the water, and throw her in with offerings of flowers and grain. All over India garlands are used as a salutation of honour and welcome to individuals as well as in religious ceremonial.

Of Muhammadan festivals one of the chief is Baker I'd, a commemoration of Abraham's offering of Ismael, in celebration of which animals are sacrificed. It is the killing of cows for this purpose which has so often led to clashes with members of the Hindu community. At Muharram, sacred to the memory of Hasan and Husain, grandsons of the Prophet, giant *Tazias* or models of tombs are carried in procession with great drums through the streets accompanied by large crowds, and are finally thrown into water or buried in the earth, new ones being prepared each year. These processions have also furnished a common source of communal rioting in the past when there is tension between the two communities. Sometimes the *tazia* is so high that it cannot pass without injuring a pipal tree sacred to the Hindus, and so trouble begins, but from long experience officials have learned to foresee and fore-stall most possible cause of friction.

All observant Muhammadans fast during the month of Ramzan, eating nothing between sunrise and sunset. The fast ends in the I'd festival, when gay crowds, dressed in new clothes, throng the mosque and the streets.

Though the great majority of Indians are too poor to spend money on amusements, theatrical performances or *jatras* by touring companies, composed only of men actors, always attract large audiences of both sexes, and as the performances are frequently given in the open air, the audience is not limited

as in a Western theatre. Nor is the length of the performance, which usually begins about 8-30 and continues till 2 or 3 a.m.

Wrestling, juggling and conjuring, snake charming, music and nautch dancing are among the traditional entertainments of India, and side by side with them we now find in the larger cities also the modern distractions of the West, movies, football matches, and horse-racing. Everywhere kite-flying is a favourite amusement of boys, and they become past-masters in the art; if you go down to the crowded quarters of the city at sunset, you will be astonished at the numbers of the coloured paper kites flying gaily over the house-tops.

One cannot give any account of Indian life without some description of the position of women in the home.

In spite of the many disabilities of women in India, in spite of their backwardness in education, in spite of purdah, in spite of early marriage, in spite of unequal laws regarding inheritance, the Hindu mother of the middle classes exerts in the home an authority and a deciding influence in the affairs of the family that we in the West find difficult to realise. It is she who often controls the purse, and it is she whose advice is sought in all difficulties; when she has made her decision, her word is not questioned. This is true among many Muhammadan families also.

According to what is known as the Hindu 'joint family system,' when the sons marry they do not set up a separate household, but the young wife

comes to live in her husband's home. Very likely there may be other relatives, of an earlier generation already forming part of the household, and so, in some Hindu families, as many as forty or fifty persons may be living under one roof. The house, whether in town or country, will probably be a large and straggling one, and will contain a household shrine with the family image, and in the courtyard there will almost always be some sacred *tulsi* plant (basil) which is carefully tended by the ladies of the family.

In recent years, owing to the rapid changes in India and the exigencies of modern life, many young men have had to leave home, and so the joint-family system has broken down to a considerable extent, but family devotion and affection remain as one of the outstanding features of Hindu life, indeed of Indian life generally among all communities. There is no limit to the sacrifices not only that parents will make for their children, but brothers for the sake of the younger members of the family. Kindness and indulgence, often over-indulgence, to children is universal, and it is rarest thing to see anyone strike a child even in the poorest and most crowded districts.

The joint-family system no doubt has advantages in reducing the cost of living per head, but it falls very hardly on the property holders and wage earners, who may be very few in number, and yet feel it a duty to support the rest. There is no poor law

anywhere in India, and the old people are always cared for by the younger generation. There are far fewer women than men, and marriage for girls is almost universal.

The greatest blot on the Indian social system is the practice of child marriage. Among many orthodox Hindus, a semi-religious importance is attached to the custom, and very often Brahman marriages are arranged when the children concerned are still infants, sometimes almost as soon as they are born. These marriages must be looked on as irrevocable betrothals, but real marriage of girls between ten and thirteen are quite common in Hindu families, and in some provinces among the poorer classes of the Muhammadan community especially in Bengal. Although the average age of marriage among the educated has risen very considerably in recent years, and is continuing to rise, they form but a small proportion of the whole, and it is estimated that still between forty and fifty per cent, of the girls of India are married by the time they are fifteen. In 1930 an Act, known as the Sharda Act, made it possible to penalize, but not to declare illegal, marriages of girls under fourteen and of boys under eighteen, but the Act is hard to work in practice, and has done little to put an end to this terrible evil, and the suffering and ill-health which it brings in its train.

I have mentioned the great influence of the mother in the family. Often she is the centre round

which the whole system moves, and in all cast functions she takes an important part. The love and reverence shown her by her sons is perhaps unequalled in any other country. Her early training is a severe one, but it results in giving her the dignity, gentleness, and selflessness which is the charm of so many Indian women. The spirit of self-sacrifice is ingrained in her from childhood, when she is taught what will be her duty to her husband, the husband chosen for her by her parents and accepted by her without question. Love, if it comes, comes after marriage, but it is only fair to say that there are probably as many happy marriages in India as in England.

When a bride who goes to live in her husband's house is still quite a young girl, and here her training is often more trying than in her own home. She has to conform to the ways of the household, and her own desires are considered little. The *bahu* or daughter-in-law treats her mother-in-law with the greatest deference and respect, and shows her unquestioning obedience. Only after she has borne a son of her own does she begin to acquire some status in the family, which gradually, increases as the years go by until she herself attains a position of authority.

Hard indeed is the lot of a Hindu girl who loses her husband. It is very rare for a Hindu widow to remarry, even a child-widow who may never have lived with, perhaps never even have seen, her hus-

band, though widow remarriage was made legal long ago. Among orthodox families, a widow dresses in white (the garb of mourning), ceases to wear jewels and the vermilion mark in the centre of the parting of the hair, and only eats one cooked meal a day. Her life is henceforth dedicated to duty and to her devotions. Sometimes she is treated with love and respect, but too often she becomes little more than an unpaid drudge in the family of her dead husband. Of recent years training-homes for Hindu widows have been opened in many centres, and it is being increasingly recognized that from the widows of the Hindu community could be drawn a devoted army of teachers, nurses, and social workers comparable to the unmarried women of the West. The organization in Poona known as the Seva Sadan, founded in 1908, was the pioneer in starting such training-schemes and continues to do splendid work. Movements are also on foot to amend the law by which a Hindu widow does not normally inherit any share of her husband's property, and to make divorce possible in certain circumstances. The progressive States of Baroda and Mysore have already gone ahead of British India in regard to such social legislation.

Among Muhammadans, the great disability of women is of course the purdah system, but behind the purdah the influence of women in the home is very great, and their legal position is better than that of their Hindu sisters, since they inherit a share

of their husband's property, and widows are free to remarry.

Among the great masses of the Indian peasantry, to whom we must now turn, women have greater freedom than among the middle classes, but their position and authority in the home are inferior.

The life of town dwellers is everywhere very different from life in the depths of the country, and until quite recent years the great majority of the villages of India were so completely out of touch with the towns that they were unaffected by any influence radiating from them. This is easy to understand when one reflects how few and far between are the towns, and how vast is the number of villages all over the Indian countryside. Life in them has continued much the same from year's end to year's end, but the last few years have brought signs of change. The motor-lorry has now made accessible hundreds of villages which are still miles away from a railway station. Pressure on the land has driven some of the peasants into industry in the towns, and they have come home again with tales of their experiences. Political propaganda against Government has been carried into the villages, and in some districts has found ready acceptance among the many sufferers from the fall in world prices. All the while education and health work have been spreading slowly into rural areas. Yes, it may fairly be said the villages of India are changing at

long last, and there is every indication that they will change still more rapidly in the future.

An Indian village is very different in appearance from a village in England. There are no picture-sque cottages, no charming cottage gardens. All over Upper India the village consists of a compact group of small dwellings built of mud, generally thatched or tiled, huddled together as closely as possible, and separated by narrow mud lanes. If there is no temple there is sure to be at least a small godling, probably smeared with red paint. The cultivators or ryots all live together in the village and go out every day to their work in the surrounding fields. You do not as a rule find scattered homesteads, except in Bengal and in parts of the south, where the walls of the dwellings are often of bamboo matting instead of mud. The better-class houses are built of brick or stone. Many villages are miles away, not only from a railway, but even from a metalled road, and only the track of a bullock-cart between the fields indicates how they may be reached. Should a stranger follow it, he will be greeted by the barking of the village dogs and a crowd of excited, black-eyed, scantily clad children who will soon gather to watch him.

Life in the village is a very simple round. The Indian day is much shorter than that of English summer, so that there is no object in the peasant's rising before daylight at six o'clock. In the cold weather in the north, it is very chilly before the

sun is up, and you will see him setting out with his *chaddar* (shawl) wrapped over his head to keep him warm. If his head and shoulders are covered, he does not seem to feel the cold in his legs, which are often bare, for instead of trousers he wears long twisted cloth called a *dhoti*, which only comes down to his knees. In the hot weather, and in the warmer parts of India all the year round, his cotton garments are all and often more than all he needs; and small children are not troubled with clothes. In the north, if he is fortunate, he will have a coat and heavy *chaddar*, and his children woollen caps and *kurtas* (short coats), in the cold weather. Except in Madras and Bengal, the dress of the country-folk is much gayer than in the towns, and the brightly coloured turbans and coats of the men, and the red purple *saris* of women, light up the drabness of the village and the countryside.

The peasant is clean in his person, and among the Hindus, even the very poor wash their garments through water each morning. But the village is not as a rule clean. Refuse is left lying about in the lanes and in the houses, which are often infested by rats, and flies abound on all the food and sweet-meats in the village money-lender's shop, round the sore eyes of many of the children, round the cattle, everywhere. If it were not for the pariah dogs which hang round the village, and for the jackals, whose weird cries echo and re-echo at night almost everywhere in India, in village and in town, and

the vultures, whose unerring sight never fails, all of them Nature's scavengers, things would be still worse. But if one of the village animals dies in the fields, there will be little trace of it in twenty-four hours except a heap of bones.

The average village home, especially in the north, is a dark and cheerless but, without chimneys and generally without windows, though there is usually an open space under the roof. Often the overcrowding is almost as bad as in the towns. In the hot weather the men probably sleep outside in the courtyard with the cattle and goats. Inside there may be literally no possessions but a few mats, a few cooking-pots, and some little store of grain, though generally there will be one or two wooden beds or charpoys of coarse string, plaited on a low wooden frame, as well as grindstones for the grain, a spinning-wheel, a *hookah*, and perhaps a few baskets. Even in comparatively good homes there are not many possessions.

The Indian peasant is poor, it is true, often miserably poor, but not, I think, miserable. His standard of living is low, but his wants and desires are few. He needs to spend little on fuel, clothing and housing compared with the peasant in Europe. He eats twice a day according to the normal custom in India, in the morning and in the evening. He never has what an Englishman would call a full meal. And yet if a European offered him food, with the possible exception of fruit, he would refuse it, for to accept would be against the rules of his caste.

For some months in the year he has to work very hard, and then for a long stretch he is enforcedly idle, apart from anything he may do in the way of home industry. Except in irrigated areas, he is pathetically dependant for his living on the monsoon. Good crops mean good money, or used to do so, after the peasant's own needs had been met, but in these days of over-production and economic depression the Indian cultivator has learned for the first time that his welfare is bound up with outside forces, besides the monsoon, over which he has no control.

The greatest enemy of the peasant is the money-lender. His want of capital to buy seed, tools, or anything else he requires, and the immemorial custom of his people to spend on weddings far more than they can afford, drive him to the money-lender, and he probably remains in debt all his life. The Co-operative Credit movement, initiated under the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, seems his one chance of escape, but it is still making slow headway, for the co-operative banks can only advance money for productive expenditure, and not for such unproductive purposes as weddings or buying jewellery.

Poor as a peasant may be, his wife is almost sure to have heavy bracelets, necklets, and anklets of silver, made by the local silversmith. Silver ornaments, except for the feet, are looked down on by townswomen, who, if they cannot, have gold, prefer to wear coloured glass bangles. The women

share the work with the men, but to them are assigned special tasks such as the grinding of the grain (which is done early each morning in the home where there is no mill within easy reach), spinning, and the making of cow-dung into fuel cakes, which are put up to dry against the outer walls; they are used very widely, especially for simmering milk. Although cow-dung would be far better employed for manuring the fields, there is often no other fuel available in the plains. It is also used to plaster the floor and threshold. Then it is the women who fetch water from the well, carrying it in the true Biblical fashion, and a beautiful picture many of them make, with shining brass pots or earthenware pitchers on their heads.

The peasant woman leads a much healthier and freer life than the majority of her town sisters. There is as a rule no purdah in the village. Often she takes food to her husband in the fields, and helps with the sowing, reaping, winnowing, and with looking after the cattle and goats. She does indeed all and more than her share, working early and late, for she has to cook and to tend the children besides all her other tasks.

The children go with their parents into the fields, the babies often slung on their mothers' backs. While the mother is at work the baby is left to sleep in a corner of the field, and it is not unknown for a little child to fall victim to a prowling leopard. As soon as they are old enough, the children begin to help in looking after the cattle, and in scaring off

birds and monkeys from the fruit or the crops. At times someone has to sit up all night calling out or banging a gong to protect a ripe crop from buck or wild pig.

Many parents do not see much object in sending their children to school, even the boys, and are very unwilling to let them stay there once they are old enough to be a real help at home in the fields, so that although there are now many village schools all over India, the great majority of the pupils are always to be found in the lowest class, and only a small proportion stay on until they have learned to read and write properly.

The village is an orderly community. The larger ones have their own temple or mosque, their own artisans, such as potter and blacksmith, tanner and carpenter and their own menials. The authority of the headman, the *lumbardar* or *patel*, is respected, and often members of the village have a council or *Panchayat* to settle local matters. Relaxations are very limited. The main topics of interest naturally centre round the state of the crops, the prospects of the monsoon, and any local dispute or litigation. When work is done, the peasant joins the circle of old men gathered together under the big village tree, generally a tamarind or sacred pipal, to smoke the *hooka* and exchange the gossip of the day. A pipal tree, which is a kind of fig, may never be cut down, and grows to a great size. It can be easily recognised by its long-pointed leaves, which rustle

so sweetly in the breeze that the gods are said to come to listen to their music. The women of the village, too, sometimes gather together to listen to stories from the sacred books recited to them by the temple priest. Wedding festivities of course there are in the village as in the town, and festivals of local deities, but it is at the big religious fairs and bathing festivals of which we have already spoken, and to which numbers of the Hindu peasantry flock from the countryside, sometimes by train, sometimes by bullock-cart or camping for days on the road, that they make contacts with their fellows beyond the narrow circle in which they live.

To see one of these fairs is a wonderful sight, the thousands of pilgrims in the water, young and old, men and women still in their bright clothes, thousands more on the banks crowding round the wares for sale, grain and sweet-meats and flower offerings, bangles and brass pots, coloured powders and paper toys. Here sit the priests and half-naked fakirs, and the wooden merry-go-rounds worked by hand are as popular as their counterparts in the West. And everywhere the gay dresses of the moving mass make a riot of colour in the brilliant sunshine.

But fairs are few and far between and everyday life in the village provides no such excitements. Day after day it pursues an even course, varied mainly by the changes in the seasons, and by the

ravages of death, for the peasant is not only himself an easy prey to disease, but his women-folk die by the thousands in child-birth through early marriage and lack of skilled care.

Like those all the world over who live in close contact with the soil, the Indian *ryot* has many lovable qualities. He is wonderfully patient, honest and kindly, with plenty of natural shrewdness, but, like other country-folk too, he is superstitious, and far more so than most because of his lack of education. He has a firm belief in evil spirits and also in the power of spells and charms to propitiate them. Perhaps partly on account of his dependence on the forces of nature, the monsoon in particular, he is essentially fatalist in outlook, a slave of custom, believing that as things have been, so they will be. The task of teaching him that many of the evils from which he suffers could be averted is only at its beginning. Yet one must not think that village life is all sadness, poverty and ignorance, for that is very far from the truth. In many ways it is happy, and especially in its simplicity and peace. In order to realize this, one has only to watch the bright eyed children, the women at the well, the men in the fields, the bullock-carts jogging with jangling bells along the rut-furrowed track, or the village herd of cattle being driven home at sunset by a young lad playing the pipes. As the light wanes, fireflies begin to dance round the tree like fairy lamps. And so we leave the villages of India asleep under the bright starlit light.

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION.

Poor John was in great tribulation, for his father was very ill and could not get well again. Except these two, there was no one at all in the little room: the lamp on the table was nearly extinguished, and it was quite late in the evening.

"You have been a good son, John," said the sick father. "Providence will help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild earnest eyes, drew a deep breath, and died: it was just as if he slept. But John wept; for now he had no one in the world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor John! He lay on his knees before the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and shed very many bitter tears: but at last his eyes closed, and he went to sleep, lying with his head against the hard bed-post.

Then he dreamed a strange dream: he saw the sun and moon shine upon him, and he beheld his father again, fresh and well, and he heard his father laugh as he had always laughed when he was very glad. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown upon her long shining hair, gave him her hand; and his father said, "Do you see what a bride you have gained? She is the most beautiful

in the whole world!" Then he awoke, and all the splendour was gone. His father was lying dead and cold in the bed, and there was no one at all with them. Poor John!

In the next week the dead man was buried. The son walked close behind the coffin, and could now no longer see the good father who had loved him so much. He heard how they threw the earth down upon the coffin, and stopped to see the last corner of it; but the next shovelful of earth hid even that; then he felt just as if his heart would burst into pieces, so sorrowful was he. Around him they were singing a psalm; those were sweet holy tunes that arose, and the tears came into John's eyes; he wept and that did him good in his sorrow. The sun shone magnificently on the green trees, just as it would have said. "You may no longer be sorrowful, John! Do you see how beautiful the sky is? Your father is up there, and prays to the Father of all that it may be always well with you."

"I will always do right, too", said John, "then I shall go to heaven to see my father; and what joy that will be when we see each other again! How much I shall then have to tell him! and he will show me so many things, and explain to me the glories of heaven, just as he taught me here on earth. Oh, how joyful that will be."

He pictured that to himself so plainly, that he smiled, while the tears were still rolling down his cheeks. The cult. For summarising narrative

passages you are advised to follow the instructions given below.

Little birds sat up in the chestnut trees, and twittered, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" They were joyful and merry, though they had been at the burying, but they seemed to know that the dead man was now in heaven; that he had wings, far larger and more beautiful than theirs; that he was now happy, because he had been a good man upon earth, and they were glad at it. John saw how they flew from the green tree out into the world, and he felt inclined to fly too. But first he cut out a great cross of wood to put on his father's grave; and when he brought it there, in the evening, the grave was decked with sand and flowers; strangers had done this, for they were all very fond of the good father who was now dead.

Early next morning John packed his little bundle, and put in his belt his whole inheritance, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few silver shillings; with this he intended to wander out into the world. But first he went to the churchyard, to his father's grave, to say a prayer and to bid him farewell.

Out in the field where he was walking all the flowers stood fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine; and they nodded in the wind, just as if they would have said "Welcome to the green wood! Is it not fine here?" But John turned back once more to look at the old church in which he had been christened when he was a little child and where he

had been every Sunday with his father at the service, and had sung his psalm; then, high up in one of the openings of the tower, he saw the ringer standing in his little pointed red cap, shading his face with his bent arm, to keep the sun from shining in his eyes. John nodded a farewell to him, and the little ringer waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to John a great many times, to show that he wished the traveller well and hoped he would have a prosperous journey.

John thought what a number of fine things he would get to see in the great splendid world: and he went on farther—farther than he had ever been before. He did not know the places at all through which he came, nor the people whom he met. Now he was far away in a strange region.

The first night he was obliged to lie down on a hay-stack in the field to sleep, for he had no other bed. But that was very nice he thought; the king could not be better off. There was the whole field, with the brook, the hay-stack, and the blue sky above it, that was certainly a beautiful sleeping room. The green grass with the little red and white flowers was the carpet; the elder bushes and the wild rose hedges were garlands of flowers; and for washhand basin he had the whole brook with the clear fresh water; and the rushes bowed before him and wished him "good evening" and "good morning". The moon was certainly a great night-

lamp, high up under the blue ceiling, and that lamp would never set fire to the curtains with its light; John could sleep quite safely, and he did so, and never woke until the sun rose and all the little birds were singing around, "Good morning! good morning! Are you not up yet?"

The bells were ringing for church; it was Sunday. The people went to hear the preacher, and John followed them, and sang a psalm and heard God's word. It seemed to him just as if he was in his own church, where he had been christened and had sung psalms with his father.

Out in the churchyard were many graves, and on some of them the grass grew high. Then he thought of his father's grave, which would at last look like these, as he could not weed it and adorn it. So he sat down and plucked up the long grass, set up the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and put back in their places the wreathes which the wind had blown away from the graves; for he thought, "Perhaps some one will do the same to my father's grave, as I cannot do it."

Outside the churchyard gate stood an old beggar, leaning upon his crutch. John gave him the silver shillings which he had, and then went away, happy and cheerful into the wide world. Towards evening the weather became terribly bad. He made haste to get under shelter, but dark night soon came on; then at last he came to a little church, which lay quite solitary on a small hill.

"Here I will sit down in a corner," said he, and went in: "I am quite tired and require a little rest." Then he sat down, folded his hands, and said his evening prayer; and before he was aware of it he was asleep and dreaming while it thundered and lightened without.

When he woke it was midnight; but the bad weather had passed by, and the moon shone in upon him through the windows. In the midst of the church stood an open coffin with a dead man in it who had not yet been buried. John was not at all timid, for he had a good conscience; and he knew very well that the dead do not harm any one. The living, who do evil, are bad men. Two such living bad men stood close by the dead man, who had been placed here in the church till he should be buried. They had an evil design against him, and would not let him rest quietly in his coffin, but were going to throw him out before the church door—the poor dead man!

"Why will you do that?" asked John; "that is bad and wicked. Let him rest, for mercy's sake."

"Nonsense!" replied the bad man; "he has cheated us. He owed us money and could not pay it, and now he's dead into the bargain, and we shall not get a penny! So we mean to revenge ourselves famously: he shall lie like a dog outside the church door!"

"I have not more than fifty dollars," cried John, "that is my whole inheritance; but I will gladly

give it you, if you will honestly promise me to leave the poor dead man in peace. I shall manage to get on without the money ; I have hearty strong limbs, and Heaven will always help me."

"Yes," said these ugly bad men, "if you will pay his debt we will do nothing to him, you may depend upon that!" And then they took the money he gave them, laughed aloud at his good nature, and went their way. But he laid the corpse out again in the coffin, and folded its hands, took leave of it, and went away contentedly through the great forest.

All around wherever the moon could shine through, between the trees, he saw the graceful little elves playing merrily. They did not let him disturb them : they knew that he was a good innocent man ; and it is only the bad people who never get to see the elves. Some of them were not larger than a finger's breadth, and had fastened up their long yellow hair with golden combs : they were rocking themselves two and two, on the great dew-drops that lay on the leaves and on the high grass ; sometimes the drops rolled away, and then they fell down between the long grass-stalks, and that occasioned much laughter and noise among the other little creatures. It was charming. They sang, and John recognised quite plainly the pretty songs which he had learned as a little boy. Great coloured spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, had to spin along hanging bridges and palaces from hedge to

"No," replied his travelling companion, "these are not clouds, they are mountains—the great glorious mountains, on which one gets quite up over the cloud and into the free air. Believe me it is delicious ! To-morrow we shall certainly be far out into the world."

But that was not so near as it looked ; they had to walk for a whole day before they came to the mountains, where the black woods grew straight up towards heaven, and there were stones almost as big as a whole town. It might certainly be hard work to get quite across them, and for that reason John and his comrade went into the inn to rest themselves well, and gather strength for the morrow's journey.

Down in the great common room in the inn many guests were assembled, for a man was there exhibiting a puppet-show. He had just put up his little theatre and the people were sitting round to see the play. Quite in front a fat butcher had taken his seat in the very best place ; his great bulldog, who looked very much inclined to bite, sat at his side, and made big eyes, as all the rest were doing too.

Now the play began, and it was a very nice play with a king and a queen in it ; they sat upon a beautiful throne and had golden crowns on their heads and long trains to their clothes, for their means admitted of that. The prettiest of wooden dolls with glass eyes and great moustaches stood at all the doors, and opened and shut them so that fresh air might come into the room. It was a very pleasant play, and not at all mournful. But—goodness knows what the

big bulldog can have been thinking of!—just as the queen stood up and was walking across the boards, as the fat butcher did not hold him he made a spring upon the stage, and seized the queen round her slender waist so that it cracked again. It was quite terrible! aged only 11, were gathered together The poor man who managed the play was very much frightened and quite sorrowful about his queen, for she was the daintiest little doll he possessed; and now the ugly bulldog had bitten off her head. But afterwards, when the people went away, the stranger said that he would put her to rights again; and then he brought out his little box, and rubbed the doll with the ointment with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as the doll had been rubbed, she was whole again; yes, she could even move all her limbs by herself; it was no longer necessary to pull her by her string. The doll was like a living person, only that she could not speak. The man who had the little puppet-show was very glad now he had not to hold this doll any more. She could dance by herself, and none of the others could do that.

When night came on, and all the people in the inn had gone to bed; there was some one who sighed so fearfully, and went on doing it so long, that they all got up to see who this could be. The man who had shown the play went to his little theatre, for it was there that somebody was sighing. All the wooden dolls lay mixed together, the king and all

his followers; and it was they who sighed so pitifully, and stared with their glass eyes; for they wished to be rubbed a little as the queen had been, so that they might be able to move by themselves. The queen at once sank on her knees, and stretched forth her beautiful crown, as if she begged, "Take this from me, but rub my husband and my courtiers!" Then the poor man, the proprietor of the little theatre and the dolls, could not refrain from weeping, for he was really sorry for them. He immediately promised the travelling companion that he would give him all the money he should receive the next evening for the representation if the latter would only anoint four or five of his dolls. But the comrade said he did not require anything at all but the sword the man wore by his side; and, on receiving this, he anointed six of the dolls, who immediately began to dance so gracefully that all the girls, the living human girls fell a-dancing too. The coachman and the cook danced, the waiter and chambermaid, and all the strangers, and the fire-shovel and tongs; but these latter fell down just as they made their first leaps. Yes, it was a merry girl!

Next morning John went away from them all with his travelling companion, up on to the high mountains, and through the great pine woods. They came so high up that the church steeples under them looked at last like little blueberries among all the green; and they could see very far, many miles away

where they had never been. So much splendour in the lovely world John had never seen at one time before. And the sun shone warm in the fresh blue air, and among the mountains he could hear the huntsmen blowing their horns so gaily and sweetly that tears came into his eyes, and he could not help calling out. "How kind has Heaven been to us all, to give us all the splendour that is in this world!"

The travelling companion also stood there with folded hands, and looked over the forest and the towns into the warm sunshine. At the same time there arose lovely sounds over their heads: they looked up, and a great white swan was soaring in the air, and singing as they had never heard a bird sing till then. But the song became weaker and weaker; he bowed his head and sank quite slowly down at their feet, where he lay dead, the beautiful bird!

"Two such splendid wings," said the travelling companion, "so white and large, as those which this bird has are worth money. I will take them with me. Do you see that it was good I got a sabre?"

And so, with one blow, he cut off both wings of the dead swan, for he wanted to keep them.

They now travelled for many, many miles over the mountains till at last they saw a great town before them with hundreds of towers, which glittered like silver in the sun. In the midst of the

town was a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold. And there the King lived.

John and the travelling companion would not go into the town at once, but remained in the inn outside the town, that they might dress themselves; for they wished to look nice when they came out into the streets. The host told them that the King was a very good man, who never did harm to any one; but his daughter, yes, goodness preserve us! she was a bad Princess. She possessed beauty enough—no one could be so pretty and so charming as she was—but of what use was that? She was a wicked witch, through whose fault many gallant Princes had lost their lives. She had given permission to all men to seek her hand. Any one might come, be he Prince or beggar: it was all the same to her. He had only to guess three things she had just thought of, and about which she questioned him. If he could do that she would marry him, and he was to be King over the whole country when her father should die; but if he could not guess the three things, she caused him to be hanged or to have his head cut off! Her father, the old King, was very sorry about it; but he could not forbid her to be so wicked, because he had once said that he would have nothing to do with her lovers; she might do as she liked. Every time a Prince came, and was to guess to gain the Princess, he was unable to do it, and was hanged or lost his head. He had been warned in time, you see,

and might have given over his wooing. The old King was so sorry for all this misery and woe, that he used to lie on his knees with all his soldiers for a whole day in every year, praying that the Princess might become good; but she would not, by any means. The old women who drank brandy used to colour it quite black before they drank it; they were in such deep mourning—and they certainly could not do more.

"The ugly Princess!" said John; "she ought really to have the rod; that would do her good. If I were only the old King she should be punished!"

Then they heard the people outside shouting "Hurrah!" The Princess came by; and she was really so beautiful that all the people forgot how wicked she was, and that is why they cried "Hurrah!" Twelve beautiful virgins, all in white silk gowns, and each with a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black steeds at her side. The Princess herself had a snow-white horse, decked with diamonds and rubies. Her riding habit was all of cloth of gold and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam; the golden crown on her head was just like little stars out of the sky, and her mantle was sewn together out of more than a thousand beautiful butterflies' wings. In spite of this, she herself was much lovely than all her clothes.

When John saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly utter a word.

The Princess looked just like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamt on the night when his father died. He found her so enchanting that he could not help loving her greatly. It could not be true that she was a wicked witch, who caused people to be hanged or beheaded if they could not guess the riddles she put to them.

"Every one has permission to aspire to her hand, even the poorest beggar. I will really go to the castle, for I cannot help doing it!"

They all told him not to attempt it for certainly, he would fare as all the rest had done. His travelling companion too tried to dissuade him; but John thought it would end well. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his nice fair hair, and then went quite alone into the town and to the palace.

"Come in!" said the old King when John knocked at the door.

John opened it, and the old King came towards him in a dressing-gown and embroidered slippers; he had the crown on his head, and the sceptre in one hand and the orb in the other. "Wait a little!" said he and put the orb under his arm, so that he could reach out his hand to John. But as soon as he learned that his visitor was a suitor, he began to weep so violently that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the ground, and was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing-gown. Poor old King!

"Give it up!" said he. "You will fare badly, as all the others have done! Well, you shall see!"

Then he led him out into the Princess's pleasure garden. There was a terrible sight! In every tree there hung three or four "Kings' sons" who had wooed the Princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she propounded to them. Each time that the breeze blew all the skeletons rattled, so that the little birds were frightened, and never dared to come into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flower-pots skulls stood and grinned. That was certainly a strange garden for a Princess.

"Here you see it," said the old King. "It will chance to you as it has chanced to all these whom you see here: therefore you had better give it up. You will really make me unhappy, for I take these things very much to heart."

John kissed the good old King's hand, and said it would go well, for that he was quite enchanted with the beautiful Princess.

Then the Princess herself came riding into the courtyard, with all her ladies; and they went out to her and wished her good morning. She was beautiful to look at, and she gave John her hand. And he cared much more for her then than before—she could certainly not be a wicked witch, as the people asserted. Then they betook themselves to the hall, and the little pages waited upon them

with preserves and gingerbread nuts. But the old King was quite sorrowful; he could not eat anything at all. Besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

It was settled that John should come to the palace again the next morning; then the judges and the whole council would be assembled, and would hear how he succeeded in his answers. If it went well, he should come twice more; but no one had yet come who had succeeded in guessing right the first time; and if he did not manage better than they he must die.

John was not at all anxious as to how he should fare. On the contrary, he was merry, thought only of the beautiful Princess, and felt quite certain that he should be helped; but how he did not know, and preferred not to think of it. He danced along on the road returning to the inn, where his travelling companion was waiting for him.

John could not leave off telling how polite the Princess had been to him, and how beautiful she was. He declared he already longed for the next day, when he was to go into the palace and try his luck in guessing.

But the travelling companion shook his head and was quite downcast. "I am so fond of you!" said he. "We might have been together a long time yet, and now I am to lose you already! You poor dear John! I should like to cry; but I will not disturb

your merriment on the last evening, perhaps, we shall ever spend together. We will be merry, very merry! To-morrow, when you are gone, I can weep undisturbed."

All the people in the town had heard directly that a new suitor for the Princess had arrived; and there was great sorrow on that account. The theatre remained closed; the women who sold cakes tied bits of crepe round their sugar-men, and the King and the priests were on their knees in the churches. There was great lamentation; for John would not they all thought, fare better than the other suitors had fared.

Towards evening the travelling companion mixed a great bowl of punch, and said to John, "Now we will be very merry, and drink to the health of the Princess." But when John had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy that he found it impossible to keep his eyes open, and he sank into a deep sleep. The travelling companion lifted him very gently from his chair, and laid him in the bed, and when it grew to be dark night, he took the two great wings he had cut off the swan, and bound them to his own shoulders. Then he put in his pocket the longest of the rods he had received from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg; and he opened the window and flew away over the town, straight towards the palace where he seated himself in a corner under the window which looked into the bedroom of the Princess.

All was quiet in the whole town. Now the clock struck a quarter to twelve; the window was opened; and the Princess came out in a long white cloak, and with black wings, and flew away across the town to a great mountain. But the travelling companion made himself invisible so that she could not see him at all, and flew behind her, whipping the Princess with his rod, so that the blood almost came whenever he struck. Oh, that was a voyage through the air! The wind caught her cloak, so that it spread out on all sides like a great sail, and the moon shone through it.

"How it hails! how it hails?" Said the Princess at every blow she got from the rod; and it served her right. At last she arrived at the mountain, and knocked there. There was a rolling like thunder, and the mountain opened, and the Princess went in. The travelling companion followed her, for no one could see him—he was invisible. They went through a great long passage, where the walls shone in quite a peculiar way: there were more than a thousand glowing spiders running up and down the walls, and gleaming like fire. Then they came into a great hall built of silver and gold; flowers as big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but no one could pluck these flowers, for the stems were ugly, poisonous snakes, and the flowers, were streams of fire pouring out of their mouths. The whole ceiling was covered with shining glow-worms and sky-blue bats, flapping their thin wings.

It looked quite terrific! In the middle of the floor was a throne, carried by four skeleton horses, with harness of fiery red spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black mice, biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of pink spider's web, trimmed with the prettiest little green flies, which gleamed like jewels. On the throne sat an old magician, with a crown on his ugly head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, made her sit down beside him on the costly throne, and then the music began. Great black grasshoppers played on Jew's-harps, and the owl beat her wings upon her body, because she hadn't drum. That was a strange concert! Little black goblins with a Jack-o'-lantern light on their caps danced about in the hall. But no one could see the travelling companion; he had placed himself just behind the throne, and heard and saw everything. The courtiers who now came in, were very grand and noble; but he who could see it all knew very well what it all meant. They were nothing more than broomsticks with heads of cabbages on them, which the magician had animated by his power, and to whom he had given embroidered clothes. But that did not matter, for, you see, they were only wanted for show.

After there had been a little dancing, the Princess told the magician that she had a new suitor, and therefore she inquired of him what she should

think of to ask the suitor when he should come to-morrow to the palace.

"Listen!" said the magician; "I will tell you that: you must choose something very easy, for then he won't think of it. Think of one of your shoes. That he will not guess. Let him have his head cut off; but don't forget, when you come to me to-morrow night, to bring me his eyes, for I'll eat them."

The Princess courtesied very low, and said she would not forget the eyes. The magician opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the travelling companion, followed her, and beat her again so hard with the rod that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hail-storm, and hurried as much as she could to get back into the bedroom through the open window. The travelling companion, for his part flew back to the inn, where John was still asleep, took off his wings, and then lay down upon the bed, for he might well be tired.

It was quite early in the morning when John awoke. The travelling companion also got up, and said he had had a wonderful dream in the night, about the Princess and her shoe; and he therefore begged John to ask if the Princess had not thought about her shoe. For it was this he had heard from the magician in the mountain.

"I may just as well ask about that as about anything else," said John. "Perhaps it is quite right,

what you have dreamed. But I will bid you farewell; for, if I guess wrong, I shall never see you more."

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and to the palace. The entire hall was filled with people; the judges sat in their arm-chairs and had feather-down pillows behind their heads, for they had a great deal to think about. The old King stood up, and wiped his eyes with a white pocket handkerchief. Now the Princess came in. She was much more beautiful than yesterday, and bowed to all in a very affable manner; but to John she gave her hand, and said, "Good morning to you."

Now John was to guess what she had thought of. Oh, how loving she looked at him! But as soon as she heard the single word "shoe" pronounced, she became as white as chalk in the face, and trembled all over. But that availed her nothing, for John had guessed right!

Wonderful! How glad the old King was. He threw a somersault, beautiful to behold. And all the people clapped their hands in honour of him and of John, who had guessed right the first time!

The travelling companion was very glad too, when he heard how well matters had gone. But John felt very grateful; and he was sure he should receive help the second and third time, as he had

been helped the first. The next day he was to guess again.

The evening passed just like that of yesterday. While John slept the travelling companion flew behind the Princess out to the mountain, and beat her even harder than the time before, for now he had taken two rods. No one saw him, and he heard everything. The Princess was to think of her glove: and this again he told to John as if it had been a dream. Thus John could guess well, which caused great rejoicing in the palace. The whole court threw somersaults, just as they had seen the King do the first time; but the Princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. Now, the question was, if John could guess properly the third time. If he succeeded, he was to have the beautiful Princess and inherit the whole kingdom after the old King's death. If he failed, he was to lose his life, and the magician would eat his beautiful blue eyes.

That evening John went early to bed, said his prayers, and went to sleep quite quietly. But the travelling companion bound his wings to his back and his sword by his side, and took all three rods with him, and so flew away to the palace.

It was a very dark night. The wind blew so hard that the tiles flew off from the roofs, and the trees in the garden where the skeletons hung bent like reeds before the storm. The lightning flashed out

every minute, and the thunder rolled just as if it were one peal lasting the whole night. Now the window opened, and the Princess flew out. She was as pale as death; but she laughed at the bad weather, and declared it was not bad enough yet. And her white cloak fluttered in the wind like a great sail; but the travelling companion beat her with the three rods, so that the blood dripped upon the ground, and at last she could scarcely fly any farther. At length, however, she arrived at the mountain.

"It hails and blows dreadfully!" she said. "I have never been out in such weather."

"One may have too much of a good thing," said the magician. "I shall think of something of which he has never thought, or he must be a greater conjurer than I. But now we will be merry." And he took the Prince by the hands, and they danced about with all the little goblins and Jack-o'-lanterns that were in the room. The red spider jumped just as merrily up and down the walls: it looked as if fiery flowers were spurting out. The owl played the drum, the crickets piped, and the black grasshoppers played on the Jew's-harp. It was a merry ball.

When they had danced long enough the Princess was obliged to go home, for she might be missed in the palace. The magician said he would ac-

company her; then they would have each other's company on the way.

Then they flew away into the bad weather, and the travelling companion broke his three rods across their backs. "Never had the magician been out in such a hail-storm." In front of the palace he said good-bye to the Princess, and whispered to her at the same time, "Think of my head." But the travelling companion heard it; and just at the moment when the Princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the magician was about to turn back he seized him by his long beard, and with his sabre, cut off the ugly conjurer's head just by the shoulders, so that the magician did not even see him. The body he threw out into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped into the water, and then tied it in his silk handkerchief, took it with him into the inn and then lay down to sleep.

Next morning he gave John the handkerchief, and told him not to untie it until the Princess asked him to tell her thoughts.

There were so many people in the great hall of the palace, that they stood so close together as radishes bound together in a bundle. The council sat in the chairs with the soft pillows, and the old King had new clothes on: the golden crown and

sceptre had been polished, and everything looked quite stately. But the Princess was very pale, and had a coal-black dress on, as if she were going to be buried.

"Of what have I thought?" she asked John. And he immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the ugly magician's head. All present shuddered, for it was terrible to look upon; but the Princess sat just like a statue, and would not utter a single word. At length she stood up, and gave John her hand, for he had guessed well. She did not look at any one, only sighed aloud, and said, "Now you are my lord! —this evening we will hold our wedding."

"I like that!" cried the old King. "Thus I will have it."

All present cried. "Hurrah!" The soldiers' band played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake-women took off the black from their sugar dolls, for joy now reigned around; three oxen roasted whole, and stuffed with ducks and fowls, were placed in the middle of the market, that every one might cut himself a slice; the fountains ran with the best wine; and whoever bought a penny cake at a baker's got six biscuits into the bargain, and the biscuits had raisins in them.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated; the soldiers fired the cannon, and the boys let off crackers; and there was eating, and drinking.

clinking of glasses, and dancing in the palace. All the noble gentlemen and pretty ladies danced with each other, and one could hear a long distance off how they sang—

“Here are many pretty girls,
who all love to dance:

See, they whirl like spinning-wheels,
retire and advance.

Turn my pretty maiden,
do, till the sole falls from your shoe.”

But still the Princess was a witch, and did not like John. That occurred to the travelling companion and so he gave John three feathers out of the swan’s wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it, and told John that he must put a large tub of water before the Princess’s bed; and when the Princess was about to get into bed, he should give her a little push, so that she should fall into the tub; and then he must dip her three times, after he had put in the feathers and poured in the drops; she would then lose her magic qualities, and love him very much.

John did all that the travelling companion had advised him to do. The Princess screamed out loudly while he dipped her in the tub, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great coal-black swan with fiery eyes. When she came up

the second time above the water, the swan was white, with the exception of a black ring round her neck, John let the water close for the third time over the bird, and in the same moment it was again changed to the beautiful Princess. She was more beautiful even than before, and thanked him, with tears in her lovely eyes, that he had freed her from the magic spell.

The next morning the old King came with his whole court, and then there was great congratulation till late into the day. Last of all came the travelling companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times, and said he must not depart, he must remain with the friend of whose happiness he was the cause. But the travelling companion shook his head, and said mildly and kindly:

"No, now my time is up. I have only paid my debt. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to injure? You gave all you possessed in order that he might have rest in his grave. I am that man."

And in the same moment he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and the Princess loved each other truly, and the old King passed many pleasant days, and let their little children ride on his knees and play with his sceptre. And John afterwards became King over the whole country.

NALA AND DAMAYANTI

Once upon a time there reigned in Nishadha a great rajah of choicest virtues whose name was Nala. He had great skill in taming steeds; he was a peerless archer, and was devoted to truth. Nala commanded a mighty army: like to the sun was his splendour, and he was exalted over all other kings as is the monarch of the gods. He had withal great piety, and he was deeply read in the Vedas, but he was ever a passionate lover of dice. Many a highborn lady spoke his praises, for he was generous of heart, and self-controlled, and guardian of law.

Now there ruled over the neighbouring state of Vidarbha the mighty rajah Bhima, the terrible in strength, who was likewise of choicest virtues. He was childless, and he yearned for children. For long he had been wont to perform many holy deeds intent upon offspring, but without avail. It chanced, however, that one day there came to his court a Brahman, named Damana, and hospitable welcome was accorded him by the child-desiring Bhima, for the seer was feasted in the hall with the rajah and his royal consort. Thereafter a boon was conferred upon the queen: she became the mother of one sweet girl, the pearl of maidens, who was named Damayanti, and of three

noble sons, Dama, Danta, and the renowned Damana, who all grew great and powerful.

When fair Damayanti had attained the full bloom of her beauty, she was unequalled throughout the world for her brilliance and for her grace. Upon the faultless and slender-waisted maiden there waited, as about Indra's queen, a hundred female slaves and a hundred virgin handmaids, and she shone among them decked with jewels and rich ornaments, like to the goddess of beauty, unrivalled and without a peer. Never among the gods, or among mortal men, was a maiden more fair ever heard of or ever beheld than soul-disturbing Damayanti, who disturbed the soul of the gods.

In presence of Bhima's sweet daughter the high-born ladies of Vidarbha took joy in constantly praising Nala, that tiger among rajahs. Likewise before Nishadha's king was Damayanti ever extolled because of her beauty. So it fell that, hearing much of each other's virtues, the silent passion of love was natured in both their hearts.

Impatient grew Nala as his love increased, and he was wont to wander in a grove within his palace garden musing secretly upon the maiden of faultless form. One day he saw disporting in the grounds a flock of beautiful swans with wings all flecked with gold. The rajah crept forward softly and seized one, and much he marvelled to hear it cry out in human language,

"Slay me not, O gentle king, and to thee I will render a service, for I will praise thee in the presence of Damayanti so that ever after she shall think of no other mortal man but thee."

Immediately Nala set the bird at liberty, and it flew away rejoicing with its bright companions towards Vidarbha. When they reached the ladies' garden of Bhima's palace they settled down at the feet of Damayanti, who was reposing in the shade with her virgin handmaids. All the fair young women gazed in wonder on the swans, admiring their graceful forms and their plumage gleaming with gold, and ere long they began to pursue them among the trees. Then of a sudden the bird which Damayanti followed spoke to her in human language and said:

"Damayanti, hear! The noble king Nala dwells in Nishadha. Comely is he as a god, nor can his equal be found in the world. Thou art the pearl of women, and he is the pride of men. If thou wert wed to him, then would perfect beauty and noble birth be united. Blessed indeed would be the union of the peerless with the peerless."

Wondering, the maiden listened while the bird conversed thus strangely, and then she said: "Speak also unto Nala in this manner."

The swan made answer: "So be it," and thereupon took flight with the others to Nishadha, where it related unto Nala all that had taken place.

Ever after that day Damayanti ceased to live for herself alone; all her thoughts were given up to Nala. She desired most to sit apart in silent reverie; the bloom faded from her cheeks and she grew dejected and melancholy. Indeed, the maiden yielded up her soul to sorrow, and much she sighed in secret, gazing upward and meditating, for love had taken possession of her heart; nor did she find pleasure in sleep, or in gentle converse, or in merry banquets. In the midst of her broken slumbers she was wont to weep and cry out: "Oh, woe is me!"

The virgin handmaidens read her heart, and they went before her sire, and told that this gentle daughter was pining for the monarch among men. When Bhima heard this, he pondered deeply what should be done for Damayanti, and he perceived that her time for the swayamvara had come. So he summoned all the highborn rajahs upon earth.

Then did the whole land resound with the trampling of elephants and horses, and the rumbling of chariots, for the stately princes, followed by their armies, swarmed towards the court of Bhima. By the strong lord of Vidarbha were they welcomed with honour, and they sat upon their thrones.

Now it happened that at this time the two wise sages, Narada and Parvata, ascended Mount Meru of Swarga, the heaven of Indra, and they saluted the cloud-compeller within his palace. The immortal lord bade them welcome and asked how it fared with

the world. Narada said it fared well with the world and with all the mighty kings. Then Indra spake, saying, "Where are all the royal heroes? Why do they not come hither as my honoured guests?"

The wise sage made answer and said: "O Cloud compeller, the great rajahs cannot appear before thee because even now they are hastening one and all to the Swayamvara of Damayanti, the renowned daughter of Bhima, the fairest woman upon earth. O slayer of drought demons, every king seeks to woo this maid of transcending beauty, for she is the pearl of all the world."

As Narada spake, the other gods drew nigh and listened to his stately utterance. Then together they exclaimed with rapture "We also will go thither...." In an instant they were hastening through the air in their chariots towards the city of Vidarbha to mingle with the wooers of Bhima's fair daughter.

Meanwhile Nala had set forth with joy, his heart full of love for Damayanti. The gods beheld him standing upon the surface of the earth with radiance like to the sun, and they arrested their course, gazing in mute wonder, for he was as comely as the god of love. Then, dropping down through the blue air, they hailed the stately hero, saying: "Do as we now beseech thee, O most excellent of princes; be thou the bearer of our message."

Nala adored the gods with folded hands and promised to obey their will; saying humbly "Who are

ye that now command my service?"

Indra spoke and said: "Lo! we are the dreaded guardians of the world: I am Indra, lord of heaven; yon is Agni, god of fire, here is Vārūna, king of the water; and there is Yama, lord of the dead. Thou must inform Damayanti that we have come to woo her and say to her: "*Choose* for thine husband one of the celestial beings."

Nala made answer with folded hands, saying: "Send me not, I entreat thee, upon this mission. How can I, who am enamoured of the maiden, plead aright the cause of another. In mercy spare me, ye gods—spare me this unwelcome service."

But the gods would not be moved from their purpose. They reminded Nala he had already promised to do their will, and they therefore urged him to set forth without delay lest he should belie his words.

Then the lord of Nishadha pleaded: "The palace of Bhīma is strongly guarded; and I cannot enter there."

Indra said: "Thou will indeed enter." And lo! even as the god spake, Nala found himself standing before Damayanti in her secret bower.

The beauteous maiden was surrounded by her virgin band, and he gazed upon her faultless limbs and slender waist and into her entrancing eyes. Her shining beauty excelled even the tender rays of the moon. The love of Nala grew deeper and stronger as

he looked upon the smiling princess; but he curbed his passion, remembering his mission.

All the maidens gazed with wonder and joy at the noble form, and in their hearts they exclaimed: "Oh! the splendid one; oh! the strong and mighty hero— who is he? . . . Is he god, or Yaksha, or Gandharva?" But they spoke not a word, for they were made bashfully silent by reason of his beauty.

Nala smiled upon Damayanti, and first she smiled softly in return; then she exclaimed in her wonder: "Who art thou that hast come hither like a celestial being to awaken all my love. Speak and tell, O sinless lord. How didst thou contrive to enter the palace unseen, for surely all the chambers are strongly guarded by stern orders of the king?"

The rajah made answer, saying: "O thou fairest one, know now that I am even Nala, and that I come hither as the messenger of the gods Indra and Agni, Varuna and Yama, and through their power have I entered here, unseen, for it is their desire that I should say unto thee: *"Choose, O princess, for thine husband one of the celestial beings."* Such is the purpose of my mission from the great world guardians. Having heard me, thou mayst decide as thou wilt."

Damayanti at once did homage to the gods. Then she smiled upon Nala and spoke saying: "Lo, I am thine already, and whatsoever I possess is thine also. O give me thy love in return, Nala. For know that my heart's love was increased by the endearing words of the

swan; and it is because of thee that the rajahs are all gathered here now. If thou wilt despise me, I will suffer death for thy sake by fire, or by water, or even by the noose."

The rajah made answer and said: "Wilt thou despise these, the gods, and choose for thine husband a mortal who is more lowly than the dust they walk upon? Let thy heart aspire to them. Remember too, that the man who incurs the anger of the world's dread guardians will meet with certain death! From such a fate oh shield me thou fairest one!... So choose one of the perfect gods, and thou shalt have robes unsullied by dust, garlands that never fade, and celestial joy without end."

Trembling, and with tear-dimmed eyes, Damayanti said: "I do homage with due humility to all the gods, but oh! I desire thee for my husband, thee and thee only".

But Nala spake saying: "I am charged with the mission of the celestial beings, and cannot plead for myself now. But afterwards I will come to claim thee, and will speak boldly, O bright one, so remember me in thine heart."

The maiden smiled through her tears. "Ah!" she said, "I see now a way of escape.... When thou comest to the swayamvara, enter thou together with the gods and I will name thee as mine own, so that no sin may be charged against thee."

and their feet did
 stand on the pavement,
 and the pavement
 was white as snow,
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wailed: "How can I discern Nala among the celestial beings?"

In her sore distress the trembling maiden folded her hands and did homage before the gods, to whom she prayed, saying:

"When I heard the sweet words of the swan I pledged my heart to Nala. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

"From my faith I have never swerved either by word or by deed. I adjure thee by this truth, O thou all knowing Power, O! reveal my lord.

"The gods have destined that Nala should be mine husband. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

"The vow which I so pledged to Nala is holy, and I must ever keep it. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

"O ye mighty ones, ye guardians of t
assume now your forms divine, so that I
Nala, the monarch of men."

The gods heard the sad maiden's pit
and marvelled greatly. They perceived
she was firm, that she was constant in
love, and was holy and wise, and
faithful to her lord. So they reveal
their greatness. Then Damayanti was
the four celestial beings because their
out moisture and their eyes never

Then Nala returned to the gods, who waited him eagerly and he told them all that the maiden had said, word for word. "In thy wisdom," he added, "thou wilt judge of what remains, O thou excelling Power."

When at length the day of happy omen, the day of the swayamvara arrived, Bhima summoned at noon-tide all the love-sick rajahs; and they passed through the court of golden columns and under the bright portal arch, and entered the Hall of State like to lions on the mountains. The rajahs were then seated on their thrones, adorned with garlands and with dangling ear-gems. The arms of some were robust and powerful like the battle mace; those of others were delicate, and smooth as a serpent. With profuse and flowing hair, shapely noses, and arching eyebrows, the faces of these great lords were radiant as the stars in heaven. As a mountain cave is full of tigers so was Bhima's great Hall full of rajah tigers on that day.

When Damayanti entered in state, every eye and every soul was entranced by her dazzling beauty; all these lords of earth gazed upon her with unmoving eyes..... The name of each rajah was proclaimed in turn, and Damayanti, looking about her, was suddenly stricken with dismay for she perceived that there were present five Nalas who were undistinguishable in form and attire one from another. The four gods who desired to win her had each assumed the likeness of her beloved one. Whichsoever of these gazed upon, he seemed to be her rajah, and in her secret heart she

wailed: "How can I discern Nala among the celestial beings?"

In her sore distress the trembling maiden folded her hands and did homage before the gods, to whom she prayed, saying:

"When I heard the sweet words of the swan I pledged my heart to Nala. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

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"The gods have destined that Nala should be mine-husband. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

"The vow which I so pledged to Nala is holy, and I must ever keep it. I adjure thee by this truth. Oh! reveal my lord.

"O ye mighty ones, ye guardians of the world, assume now your forms divine, so that I may know Nala, the monarch of men."

The gods heard the sad maiden's piteous prayer and marvelled greatly. They perceived that her resolve was firm, that she was constant in truth and in love, and was holy and wise, and that she remained faithful to her lord. So they revealed the tokens of their greatness. Then Damayanti was able to discern the four celestial beings because their skins were without moisture and their eyes never winked, there was

no dust on their garlands and their feet did not touch the earth. She also knew Nala because he cast a shadow ; there was dust on his raiment, and his garland was beginning to fade ; drops of moisture stood on his skin, and his eyelids moved.

Gazing first upon the celestial beings and then upon him who was her heart's desire, Damayanti named Nala as her lord. She modestly touched the hem of his garment and threw round his neck a wreath of bright flowers, and thus chose him for her husband.

All the rivals of Nala uttered cries of sorrow, but the gods and the sages exclaimed aloud : "Well done ! Well done !" and honoured the Lord of Nishadha.

Nala spake in his joy to fair Damayanti, saying : "Since thou, O maiden, with serene smile, hast chosen me for thine husband in the presence of the gods, know that I will be faithful consort who will ever take delight in thy words. I am thine, and so long as my life endures I will be thine only."

So did the lord of Nishadha pledge his faith, and the heart of the maiden was made glad. The happy pair then did homage before the gods and these resplendent guardians of the earth bestowed, in their joy, eight surpassing gifts upon Nala. Indra gave him power to behold the godhead in the sacrifice, and power to walk unhindered by any obstacle wheresoever desired ; Agni gave him power over fire, and power over three worlds ; Varuna gave him power over water,

and power to obtain fresh garlands at will ; and Yama gave him subtle skill in preparing food, and eminence in every virtue. Each of the gods also conferred his double blessings upon Nala ; and thereafter they departed.

All the rajahs wondered greatly when they beheld the maiden's choice confirmed in this manner and they went away as they came with joy, and returned unto their own domains.

Bhima rejoiced greatly when the happy bridal was celebrated in pomp and with state, and he bade Nala adieu with great courtesy when that great lord of Nishadha, after fitting sojourn at Vidarbha, set out to return to his native city with the pearl of women whom he had won.

Now it chanced that when the gods had left the swayamvara they met in the midst of the blue air Kali, the demon of evil, who was accompanied by the wicked spirit Dwapara. Indra, the slayer of giants spoke and said : "Whither are thou going with Dwapara, O Kali?"

Kali made answer : "We are hastening to the swayamvara, for it is my desire to obtain Damayanti as my bride."

Smiling, the king of gods spake, saying : "The bridal is now arranged and ended, for lo ! the fair Damayanti has chosen Nala for her husband in our presence."

When he heard these words, the heart of Kali was made angry, and he exclaimed : "Since she has preferred

a mortal in presence of the celestial beings let her choice be her own doom."

But the gods said : " Know thou that our consent was freely given, because Damayanti has chosen for herself a husband endowed with all the virtues, and equal even to the guardians of the world. If anyone should chance to curse Nala, the curse will recoil fatally, and the curser will be cast into the torments of the dark lake of hell," Having spoken thus; the bright deities ascended the heavens.

Then said Kali to Dwapara : " I cannot now control my fierce wrath, Lo ! I will be avenged upon Nala, for I will enter his body, and he will be bereft of his kingdom and of his bride. Thou, Dwapara, wilt enter the dice and give me thine aid."

So was malignant compact arranged between the demon of evil and his darksome ally and together they went towards Nishadha to haunt the stately palace of Nala ,waiting for the fatal moment.

RIP VAN WINKLE

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple; and point their bold outlines, on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of grey vapours about their summits which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the government

of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few yards, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village and in one of these very houses, (which to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple goodnatured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkle who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple goodnatured man; he was moreover, a kind neighbour, and an obedient henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity, for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took this part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity, and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance, for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run

their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was decidedly the worst farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin, begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligasking, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the

world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble; and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinging in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night; her tongue was incessantly going; and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side, which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-daring and allbesetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance

at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age and a sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions on bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, the landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took

his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree, so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak; but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that August personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, scared from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labour of

the farm and clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the report of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the soil of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep-mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing: "Rip, Van Winkle! Rip, Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air; "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and, giving a loud growl, skulled to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin, strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity, and, mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which tall trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had laboured on in silence, for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a

keg of a liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of style similar to that of the Guides. Their visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugarloaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a lace doublet, broad belt, and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stocking, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole goup reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting in the parlour of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they

maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companions approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavour of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He

rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woebegone party at ninepins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip; "what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old-fire-lock lying by him, the barre incrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm eaten. He now suspected that the grave roisterers of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoe repeated his whistle shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol and, if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip; "and if this frolic should lay me

up with a fit of rheumatism; I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen; he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but, to his astonishment, a mountain stream was now foaming down it—leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometime tripped up or entangled by the wild grape-vines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rock presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung sunny precipice; and who secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done?—the morning was passing away, and Rip fell famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and his gun; he dreaded to meet his

wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same—when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long !

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his grey beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered, it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses, which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely, this was his native village, which he had left

but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been. Rip was solely perplexed. "That slogan last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. The desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle."

Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there was now reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folks about the door, but none that Rip recollects. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair longe pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the school-master, doing forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of hand-bills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six and other words, which were a perfect Baby-lonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

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The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?" Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating as it were into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "What brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"— "Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king. God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystander— "A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order;

and having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, "Where's Nicholas Vedder?"

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied in a thin piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him

too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war congress—Stony Point:—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, “Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?”

“Oh, Rip Van Winkle!” exclaimed two or three, “Oh, to be sure! that’s Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree.”

Rip looked and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain; apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name.

“God knows,” exclaimed he, at his wit’s end: “I’m not myself—I’m somebody else—that’s me yonder—no—that’s somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they’ve changed my gun, and everything’s changed, and I’m changed, and I can’t tell what’s my name, or who I am!”

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some

precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the grey-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arm, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

"What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Gardiner."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name; but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

"Where's your mother?"

"Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New England pedlar."

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am your father!" cried he—"Young Rip Van

Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now! —Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and piercing under it in his face for a moment exclaimed. "Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbour—Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks: and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village and well-versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed

that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the *Halfmoon*; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in a hollow of the mountain, and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished, house, and a stout cheery farmer for her husband, whom Rip recollects for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time, and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favour.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench

at the inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that instead of being a subject of his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of States and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one kind of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Wink. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed at first to vary on some points every time he told it which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighbourhood but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that

Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunder-storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all hen-pecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip-Van Winkle's flagon.

THE STORY OF ALI-BEY, THE PERSIAN

Disgusted with the constant flattery of his courtiers and their attempts to please him at all times, Shah Abbas, king of Persia, wanted to study rustic life and to visit labourers and shepherds, who did not know him. He decided to withdraw from his court for some time and to travel through the country disguised as an ordinary man. He took only one of his courtiers with him, and began to go from village to village and mix with the rustics as if he was one of them. He was charmed to see the dignity and independence of the rustics, which formed a marked contrast to the servile and fawning attitude of the average courtier. The simple, innocent and inexpensive pleasures of the country people with whom he came into contact, and their dances appeared to him far more pleasing and graceful than anything he had seen in his court.

After the first day's journey, when the king was extremely tired and hungry, a simple villager invited him to take rest in his hut. The king had a hearty meal in the hut, and the coarse food of the peasant seemed to him more agreeable than all the delicacies of his own table. He enjoyed sound sleep on a rough cot provided by his host.

The king left the place early next morning and started for one of his remotest villages. He passed by a sweet meadow, where he found a young shepherd tending sheep and playing a happy strain on his flute. The king felt attracted towards him and accosted him. He found his manners pleasant and his demeanour noble and gracious. His rags could not hide the nobility of his bearing.

"Tell me, young man," said the king, "if you are not of illustrious birth tending sheep in disguise? The rags in which you are clothed cannot hide your grace, and I find that your manners are simple and yet dignified. Tell me truthfully, if you are really one in disguise, and no harm shall come to you."

"O stranger," replied the young man, "I do not understand what you mean by 'noble birth' and 'disguise!' I was born in a village near by where my parents live to this day."

The king was greatly impressed by the manners of this young man, and questioned him further. He admired the sensible answers of the shepherd whose eyes were bright and whose voice was gentle and sympathetic. Though only seventeen years old the shepherd boy seemed to have learnt, without education, all that reason can teach those who listen to her. The boy did not have the least idea that he was talking to the king, and so he talked in a most unrestrained manner. There was nothing in him of the artificiality and hypocrisy of

the courtiers. From him the king came to know the true state of his people, which kings can never come to know from the crowd of flatterers who surround them.

Ali-bey, as the shepherd was called, simply charmed the king, who said "I see clearly that nature is not less bountiful in the lowest ranks than in the highest. I should consider myself most happy to have a son as stalwart, as sensible and as gentle as Ali-bey. If he is properly educated he can one day become a great man."

So the king carried off Ali-bey. When the latter came to know that he had won the favour of the king he was greatly surprised. The atmosphere of the court bewildered him, and he wanted to return to his simple life. But the king treated him like his own son. He was sent to the best teachers in the land, who taught him to read and write. Then the knowledge of the various sciences and fine arts was imparted to him. The king, pleased with his progress admitted him to his court. Instead of his crook, his flute and shepherd's dress, he had now a robe of purple embroidered with gold, and a turban covered with precious stones. But his change of fortune did not change the simplicity and nobility of his character. He proved to be honest, reliable, hardworking and capable of dealing with serious affairs, and these qualities enabled him to win the confidence of his master. The king finally gave

him a very important office in Persia involving the charge of all the king's jewels and most precious possessions.

Ali-bey proved himself fit for every task of responsibility that was entrusted to him and so he continued to gain fame and name in the reign of Shah Abbas. But he often thought of his former free and simple condition and regretted the change. "O beautiful days!" he used to say to himself "innocent days when I enjoyed pure and untroubled happiness, shall I never see you again? He who has deprived me of you, though giving me great riches, has deprived me of everything." He used to visit the scenes of his happy days and make presents to the companions of his youth, but he sincerely advised them never to leave their country life, to judge better than he and never to experience the sorrows of the court.

Unfortunately, Ali-bey had to experience many sorrows after the death of Shah Abbas, whose son and successor, Shah Sephi, was young, credulous, neglectful and reckless. His courtiers, therefore, filled his ears with various lies about Ali-bey. They accused him of having appropriated the king's money for his own purpose. Shah Sephi believed what his favourite courtiers said. He was vain enough to wish to reform what his father had done, and to judge better than he. In order to have a pretext for dismissing Ali-bey from service, he ordered him to produce scimitar

ornamented with diamonds of enormous value, which the king's grandfather used to carry in battle. The diamonds had been removed long ago by the orders of Shah Abbas, and Ali-bey proved by trustworthy evidence that the removal had taken place by the orders of the late king and before he had received his office.

Ali-bey's enemies now tried another trick to ruin him. They advised the king to command him to make within two weeks an exact inventory of all the precious things in his charge. At the end of this period, the king inspected the treasury, but was surprised to find everything well cared for and in good order.

The king was almost convinced that Ali-bey was innocent when his eye fell on a strong iron door with three large locks at the end of that long gallery. The enemies of Ali-bey did not fail to insinuate that that was the place where he had hidden his stolen treasures. The king ordered Ali-bey to open the door. At this Ali-bey fell on his knees and begged the king not to deprive him of his most precious possessions on earth.

"It is not just," said he, "that I should lose in one moment all that remains to me and gives me repose, after having laboured so many years for your royal father. Take from me, if you will, all the rest, but leave me this."

Shah Sephi was now convinced that some wrongly acquired treasure was stored in that room. So he angrily ordered Ali-bey to open that door. And what

was to be found in that room? Nothing except the crook, flute and the shepherd's dress that Ali-bey had worn of old.

"Behold, great king" said he, "the precious relics of my former happiness; neither fortune nor your power have been able to deprive me of them. Here is my treasure, that I am keeping to enrich me when you have made me poor. Take back all the rest, but leave me these dear pledges of my early happiness. O. dear symbol of a quiet and happy life, it is with you that I would live and die!"

The king, hearing these words, was convinced of Ali-bey's innocence and he became so furious with his courtiers that he immediately banished them from his court. He then made Ali-bey his chief minister and placed all the affairs of the state in his charge. Ali-bey's high position did not make him swelled-headed. Every day he went to see his crook, flute and shepherd's dress, which he kept always ready in case a change of fortune should deprive him of the king's favour. He died in his ripe old age, without having wished either to punish his enemies or to accumulate treasure, and left to his heirs only enough to maintain them as shepherds, a condition of life which he thought the most secure and happy.

CHONDA OF MEWAR.

Lakha Rana was advanced in years, his sons and grandsons established in suitable domains, when "the cocoa-nut came" from Rinmal, prince of Mewar, to affiance his daughter with Chonda, the heir of Mewar. When the embassy was announced, Chonda was absent, and the old chief was seated in his chair of state surrounded by his court. The messenger of Hymen was courteously received by Lakha, who observed that Chonda would soon return and take the gage; "for," added he, drawing his fingers over his mustachios, "I don't suppose you send such play things to an old greybeard like me." This little sally was of course applauded and repeated; but Chonda, offended at delicacy being sacrificed to wit, declined accepting the symbol which his father had even in jest supposed might be intended for him: and as it could not be returned without gross insult to Rinmal, the old Rana, incensed at his son's obstinacy, agreed to accept it himself, provided Chonda would swear to renounce his birth-right in the event of his having a son, and be to the child but "the first of his Rajputs." He swore by Eklinga to fulfil his father's wishes.

Mokulji was the issue of the union, and had attained the age of five when the Rana resolved to

signalise his finale, by a raid against the enemies of their faith, and to expel them from holy land of Gya. In ancient times this was by no means uncommon, and we have several instances in the annals of these states of princes resigning "the purple" on the approach of old age, and by a life of austerity and devotion, pilgrimage and charity, seeking to make their peace with heaven "for the sins inevitably committed by all who wield a sceptre." But when war was made against their religion by the Tartar proselytes to Islam, the Sutledge and the Gagger were as the bank of the Jordan—Gya, their Jerusalem, their holy land; and if their destiny filled his cup, the Hindu chieftain was secure of beatitude; exempted from the trouble of "second birth," and borne from the scene of probation in celestial cars by the Apsaras, was introduced at once into the "realm of the sun." Ere, however, the Rana of Cheetore journeyed to this bourn, he was desirous to leave his throne unexposed to civil strife. The subject of succession had never been renewed: but discussing with Chonda his war-like pilgrimage to Gya, from which he might not return, he sounded him by asking what estates should be settled on Mokul. "The throne of Cheetore," was the honest reply; and to set suspicion at rest he desired that the ceremony of installation should be performed previous to Lakha's departure. Chonda was the first to pay homage and swear obedience and fidelity to his future sovereign, reserving, as the recompence of his renunciation, the first place in the council, and stipulating that in all

grants to the vassals of the crown, his symbol (the lance) should be superadded to the autograph of the prince. In all grants the lance of Saloombra still precedes the monogram of the Rana.

The sacrifice of Chonda to offended delicacy and filial respect was great, for he had all the qualities requisite for command. Brave, frank, and skilful, he conducted all public affairs after his father's departure and death, to the benefit of the minor and the state. The queen-mother, however, who is admitted as the natural guardian of her infant's rights on all such occasions, felt umbrage and discontent at her loss of power; forgetting that but for Chonda she would never have been the mother to the Rana of Mewar. She watched with a jealous eye all the proceedings; but it was only through the medium of suspicion she could accuse the integrity of Chonda and she artfully asserted that, under colour of directing state affairs he was exercising absolute sovereignty, and that if he did not assume the title of Rana he would reduce it to an empty name. Chonda, knowing the purity of his own motives made liberal allowance for maternal solicitude; but upbraiding the queen with the injustice of her suspicions, and advising a vigilant care to the rights of the Sesodias, he retired to the Court of Mandoo, then rising into notice, where he was received with the highest distinctions and the district of Hallar was assigned to him by the King.

His departure was the signal of an influx of the kindred of the queen from Mundore. Her brother Joda (who afterwards gave his name to Jodhpoor) was the first, and was soon followed by his father, Rao Rinmal, and numerous adherents who deemed the arid region of Maroo-Des and its rabri or maize porridge, well exchanged for the fertile plains and wheaten bread of Mewar.

With his grandson on his knee, the old Rao "would sit on the throne of Bappa Rawal, on whose quitting him for play, the regal ensigns of Mewar waved over the head of Mundore." This was more than the Sesodia nurse could bear, and bursting with indignation, she demanded of the queen if her kin was to defraud her own child of his inheritance. The honesty of the nurse was greater than her prudence. The queen soon found herself without remedy, and a remonstrance to her father produced a hint which threatened the existence of her offspring. Her fears were soon after augmented by the assassination of Ragoodeva, the second brother of Chonda whose estates were Kailwara and Kowaria. To the former place, where he resided aloof from the court, Rao Rinmal sent a dress of honour, which etiquette requiring him to put on when presented, the prince was assassinated in the act. Ragoodeva was so much beloved for his virtues, courage and manly beauty, that his murder became a martyrdom, and obtained for him divine honours and a place amongst the *Dii*.

Patres (Pitrideva) of Mewar. His image is on every hearth, and is daily worshipped with the *Penates*. Twice in the year his altars receive public homage from every Sesodia, from the Rana to the Serf.

In this extremity the queen-mother turned her thoughts to Chonda, and it was not difficult to apprise him of the danger which menaced the race, every place of trust being held by her kinsmen, and the principal fort of Cheetore by a Bhatti Rajput of Jessulmer. Chonda, though at a distance, was not inattentive to the proverbially dangerous situation of a minor amongst the Rajputs. At this departure he was accompanied by two hundred Ahaireas or huntsmen, whose ancestors had served the princes of Cheetore from ancient times. These had left their families behind, a visit to whom was a pretext for their introduction to the fort. They were instructed to get into the service of the keeper of the gates, and being considered more attached to the family their object was effected. The queen-mother was counselled to cause the young prince to descend daily with a numerous retinue to give feasts to the surrounding villages, and gradually to increase the distance but not to fail, on the "festival of lamps" to hold the feast at Gosoonda.

The injunctions were carefully attended to. The day arrived, the feast was held at Gosoonda; but the night was closing in and no Chonda appeared. With heavy

hearts the nurse, the Purohit and those in the secret, moved homeward and had reached the eminence called Cheetore, when forty horsemen passed them at the gallop, and at their head Chonda in disguise, who by a secret sign paid homage as he passed to his younger brother and sovereign. Chonda and his band had reached the Rampole, or upper gate, unchecked. Here; when challenged, they said they were neighbouring chieftains, who hearing of the feast at Gosoonda had the honour to escort the prince home. The story obtained credit; but the main body, of which this was but the advance, presently coming up, the treachery was apparent. Chonda unsheathed his sword, and at his well-known shout the hunters were speedily in action. The Bhatti chief, taken by surprise, and unable to reach Chonda launched his dagger at and wounded him, but was himself slain; the guards at the gates were cut to pieces and the Rathores hunted out and killed without mercy.

